

**Buddhist Monks and their Search for Knowledge:  
an examination of the personal collection of manuscripts  
of Phra Khamchan Virachitto (1920-2007), Abbot of Vat  
Saen Sukharam, Luang Prabang**

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## Preface

This dissertation is a study of Buddhist monks and their search for knowledge. Specifically, this dissertation investigates the manuscripts kept in the abode of a senior monk and an eminent abbot, Sathu Nyai Khamchan, a former president of Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization of Luang Prabang province. The dissertation predominantly examines a variety of sources collected by him during his monkhood (1941–2007), including a large numbers of manuscripts, photographs, books, printed materials, and Buddhist objects. This inventory constitutes a knowledgeable collection (intellectual property) of the Buddhists in Luang Prabang. After he passed away, 416 manuscripts (palm-leaf 330, paper 86) were found in his abode.

About 400 manuscripts were also found in other monastic buildings (in effect, an ordination hall, a sermon hall and a monastic museum) in the same monastery. It is thus reasonable to say that the Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS) collection – more precisely the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan – comprises more or less 800 manuscripts, which were not documented by the project *The Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme* (PLMP) in 1990s. At that time, the PLMP paid much more attention to manuscripts held in monastic libraries (*hò tai ຫໍ່ໄຕ*) than those kept in private collections.

My interest in the manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan is a result of my experiences as a member of the research team for the project *The Lao Sangha and Modernity* (LSM), which reached his domicile in March 2012. The manuscripts were enclosed in colourful fabrics and kept in various cabinets in an altar room. Of these, a half-length manuscript was unwrapped; its title was written in the Lao script and language and read *van koet ວັນເກີດ* (birthday). The title was written with a marker in blue ink, thereby differentiating it from manuscripts produced with the traditional tool – a stylus. This difference made me much eager to investigate the manuscripts kept in his collection.

The main topic areas discussed in this dissertation are: an overview of Lao manuscript culture, knowledge related to religious and non-religious subjects, and various aspects of modernity reflected in the manuscripts.

## Acknowledgement

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I am grateful to the competence network *Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia* (DORISEA), which is financially supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), for employing me as a researcher from 2011 to 2015. This employment allowed me to pursue my doctoral studies at the University of Hamburg and complete this PhD thesis. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent library and other facilities at the Asia-Africa Institute (AAI). Moreover, I would like to thank all of the professors, lecturers and other staff working for the AAI's Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia.

I am most grateful to the Faculty of Letters, the National University of Laos, and the Ministry of Education and Sports in Laos for approving my application to conduct research and study abroad for the last five years.

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Furthermore, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Michael Zimmermann, Director of the Numata Centre of Buddhist Studies in Hamburg, for providing me valuable insights into the basic methods of Buddhist Studies and helping me with some difficult terms in Pali. His inputs are highly appreciated as well.

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My thanks are also due to Hans Georg Berger and all of the people at the Buddhist Archive of Luang Prabang who helped me to document the manuscripts kept in numerous monasteries.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my grandmother, wife, daughters and son, and all of my other relatives who looked after our home and family when I was working and studying abroad. Without their thoughtful assistance, I would not have succeeded in fulfilling my work and study obligations and, in particular, completing this dissertation.

Bounleuth Sengsoulin  
Hamburg, 08 August 2016.

## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full names / meanings
AD	Anno Domini (Christian Era)
BAD	Buddhist Archive of Documents
BE	Buddhist Era
BC	Before Christian Era
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research)
CS	Chulasakarat (Minor Era) / Cūlasakarāja
DLLM	Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts
DORISEA	Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia
EFEQ	École française d'Extrême-Orient
GBC	Great Buddhist Council
LBFO	Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization
LFNC	Lao Front for National Construction
PLMP	Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme
LPPM	Luang Prabang Provincial Museum
LSM	Lao Sangha and Modernity
NGD	National Geographic Department
R-LBFO07-08	Report of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization 2007–2008
UNESCO	United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VPK	Vat Pak Khan
VSK	Vat Suvanna Khili
VSS	Vat Saen Sukharam
VXM	Vat Xiang Muan
VXT	Vat Xiang Thòng

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# Buddhist Monks and their Search for Knowledge: an examination of the personal collection of manuscripts of Phra Khamchan Virachitto<sup>1</sup> (1920-2007), Abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam, Luang Prabang

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In order to give a comprehensive overview of the themes explored in the thesis, this introductory chapter will discuss the following six matters: the origin of Luang Prabang, the Buddhist monkhood in Luang Prabang, a short biography of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, and the current state of the arts. It will also outline the aims of the study, the methodology employed, and the structure of the thesis thus far. The thesis will mainly exemplify Lao Buddhist Sangha, Lao manuscript culture, and knowledge of various subjects of monks that were recorded as manuscripts.

#### 1. Luang Prabang<sup>2</sup>

Local chronicles and oral histories report that, in the past, the area of present-day Luang Prabang was settled by an indigenous group known as the Sua, where they established their

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<sup>1</sup> According to the tradition of the people of Luang Prabang, Sathu – derived from the Pali word *sadhu* (good; virtuous; profitable) – is used as a title/prefix before the name of royalty and monks. While Sathu is placed before the name of a monk who has already received an anointment, another word, Mòm, is used for a newly-ordained monk, or for someone who has not yet been anointed. In other words, the Buddhists of Luang Prabang do not place ‘Pha’ before the monk’s name; they have adopted ‘Sathu’ instead. When a monk has lived in a monastery for more than twenty Buddhist years, or *phansa*, Sathu can – traditionally – be followed by Nyai. The word *nyai* itself means ‘big; senior; important’. The traditional rule is that to be called Sathu Nyai the monk is not only required to have remained in the monkhood for at least twenty years, he must also be a strict adherent to Buddhist teachings. Sathu Nyai literally means senior monk. In this paper, Sathu Nyai Khamchan is used to refer to the Most Venerable Phra Khamchan Virachitto.

In practice, both Sathu and Mòm can be used as personal pronouns. They are used as a first-person pronoun (I/me) by monks, as a second-person pronoun (you) if a monk is being addressed, or as third person pronoun (he/him) if a monk is being referred to. This might be one indication that the Buddhists of Luang Prabang have their own traditions vis-à-vis how they address each other and other people.

<sup>2</sup> Some parts of this section were developed from a working paper written for DORISEA, No. 9, 2014, ISSN: 2196-6893.

*müang* (principality) named Müang Sua. According to a variety of Lao chronicles,<sup>3</sup> in the year AD 757, Chao Khun Lò of Müang Ka Long<sup>45</sup> was asked for help by a ruler of his dependent *müang*, Thao Fa Huan in Müang Tum Vang. In order to suppress the army of Khun Chüang<sup>6</sup>, Chao Khun Lò led his soldiers to Müang Tum Vang to rescue his subordinate. On the battlefield he engaged in single combat with Khun Chüang, which ended with Chao Khun Lò striking a fatal blow at Khun Chüang atop his war elephant. Seeing this, Khun Chüang's forces scattered, after which Chao Khun Lò and his men pursued them until they reached Müang Sua, ruled by Khun Kan Hang. Chao Khun Lò attacked and conquered Müang Sua. He then raised Müang Sua to the status of the capital city of his kingdom, and named it Müang Xiang Thòng (Stuart-Fox 1998: 36–37; Maha Sila 2001: 26–28). Alternative names sometimes used by local people include Müang Xiang Dong or Xiang Thòng.

In AD 1353, King Fa Ngum united a number of *müang* and established the Kingdom of Lan Xang with its capital at Müang Xiang Thòng (or Müang Xiang Dong Xiang Thòng). Local historiography states that six years later (1359), Buddhism was introduced to the kingdom from Cambodia.<sup>7</sup> Well-educated members of the Buddhist Sangha of the Khmer Empire came to Xiang Thòng bearing Phra Bang Buddha statues, where they received a warm welcome. Three unordained senior Buddhist scholars and a number of their followers also accompanied the delegation (Lorrillard 2003: 188; Maha Sila 2001: 46). Much later, in AD 1523, King Phothisalalat sent envoys to Chiang Mai, then the capital of the Kingdom of Lan Na, to ask for the *Tipitaka* to be given to Lan Xang.

In AD 1560, Chao Sayasetthathilat transferred the capital city of Lan Xang from Müang Xiang Thòng to Vientiane. With the consent of his high-ranking officials, he gave

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<sup>3</sup> For more details, see manuscripts nos. 06-01-03-14-223-01, 06-01-07-14-234-07, 06-01-14-14-001-11, 06-01-18-14-114-13, 06-01-23-14-055-01, 06-01-24-14-0993-02, 06-01-85-14-001-00, 06-01-85-14001-02, 06-01-85-14-001-03, 01-01-29-14-002-01.

<sup>4</sup> The exact location is unknown. However, Maha Sila Viravong's (Maha Sila) *History of Laos* (1964), translated from the Laotian by the U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, states that Müang Ka-Long is the former name of present-day Müang Xieng-Hung (Jinghong, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province of China) (p.5)

<sup>6</sup> According to Maha Sila, Khun Chüang was the ruler of Müang Ngoen Nyang, modern-day Chiang Saen in Thailand (Maha Sila 2001: 26). He went to war with Vietnam and conquered Müang Pakan, modern-day Siangkhuang (Xiangkhouang) in Laos.

<sup>7</sup> Again, here we deal with Lao Buddhist accounts of history. See the work by Michel Lorrillard who contends that the general history detailing the introduction of Buddhism to Laos remains unclear because "the conditions surrounding this penetration remain very imprecise, due to the long duration of this process" (Lorrillard 2006: 144). This is also valid argument for the idea that Buddhism came to Laos from the Khmer empire. Lorrillard (2006:144), moreover, emphasises the "complete[y] artificial nature of this narration."

Müang Xiang Thòng to the Buddhist Sangha (Lao: *pha sangkha chao* ພະສັງຄະເຈົ້າ). He brought Pha Kaeo Mòlakot (the Emerald Buddha) and Pha Saek Kham with him to the new capital, but he left the Pha Bang statue in its place in the old capital city of the kingdom. This might suggest that he left Pha Bang in the old capital because Pha Bang was brought to Laos about six years after the emergence of the Lan Xang kingdom and placed in the city of Xiang Thòng. Therefore, this statue is recognized as an auspicious symbol of the city (Lao: *pha ming müang* ພະມິ່ງເມືອງ). Furthermore, Buddhist monks were asked to become familiar with the administration of the old capital city. From that time onwards, Müang Xiang Thòng was called Müang Luang Prabang (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: 128–129; Maha Sila 2001: 73).

The political and religious centre of Luang Prabang was located on a peninsula, defined by a defensive wall reaching from the Mekong river to the Nam Khan river. According to the local narrative, the Buddha travelled through the region and was smiling during his day-long rest here. He predicted that Luang Prabang would “become a flourishing city in the future”.<sup>8</sup> Yet another legend ascribes the choice of the location to two hermits who, attracted by its natural beauty, gave it the above mentioned name Xiang Dong or Xiang Thòng. It is believed that fifteen *nāga* (hybrid beings) (Lao: *phanya nak*) and their attendants first inhabited the region. When they died they became the Guardian Spirits of the city (Lao: *phi müang* ຜີເມືອງ). It was not until much later that human beings settled in the region.

Throughout a period of over two centuries when Xiang Thòng was the capital of the Lan Xang kingdom, there were a number of well-educated monks and scholars who possessed knowledge of Sanskrit and Pali, the ancient languages of India that were used to record the teachings of the Buddha. A number of important religious texts and literary works were composed or translated into Lao during the reign of King Visun (r. 1500–1520). Two examples of such outstanding works are: the Sanskrit book entitled *Pañcatantra* (The Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom)<sup>9</sup>, which was translated into Lao by a senior monk and the original version of the Chronicle of Kun Burom, which was

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<sup>8</sup> For more details, see manuscripts nos. 06-01-03-14-223-01, 06-01-07-14-234-07, 06-01-14-13-018-00, 06-01-14-13-019-00, 06-01-14-14-001-11, 06-01-18-14-114-13, 06-01-23-14-055-01, 06-01-24-14-099-02, 06-01-85-14-001-00, 06-01-85-14-001-02, 06-01-85-14-001-03, 01-01-29-14-002-01.

<sup>9</sup> *Pañcatantra* is an ancient Indian collection of folktales. According to Viṣṇuśarma (2006: 17–18), “The migration of *Pañcatantra* through the rest of the world is even more fascinating. There are over 200 versions in more than 50 languages. Indeed, “The Five Discourses” spread at an earlier time and more extensively in the world than any other piece of Indian literature, including such well-known texts as the *Bhagavadgītā*. Anyone who reads the *Pañcatantra* can surely understand the reasons for its popularity”. In Laos, this story is known as Nang Tan Tay (ນາງຕັນຕ່າຍ). For more details about this version, please see Vo Thu Tinh (1972).

composed by two senior monks and the king himself. The latter example demonstrates how the Buddhist monks of Luang Prabang (and of Laos as a whole) not only fulfilled strictly “religious” roles, but also frequently performed tasks that from today’s perspective might be characterized as “secular”.<sup>10</sup> In the pre-modern era, they simply completed tasks that were regarded as acceptable duties by their own communities.

Currently, Luang Prabang is the capital city of the province with the same name. Luang Prabang province comprises an area of 16,875 square kilometres or 7.12% of Laos and 431,439 inhabitants or 7.1% of the nation’s total population. The Khmu are the largest ethnic group in this province and make up the majority of the provincial population. The Khmu of Laos constitute over eight per cent (8.3%) of the nation’s total population (The National Geographic Department (NGD), 2010). They belong to the Mon-Khmer linguistic family, one of the main language families in Laos existing alongside the national language of Lao. The Khmu – in former times known as *kha* (roughly translated as “slave”) and recognized as Lao Thoeng (“midland Lao”) – are believed to be the original inhabitants of the area. The Lao – the largest ethnic group in Laos, formerly known as Lao Lum (“lowland Lao”) – predominantly live in valleys along the rivers, as well in the town of Luang Prabang. The Hmong – formerly referred to as the Lao Sung (“highland Lao”) – are the third largest ethnic group in the province of Luang Prabang. They mainly reside mainly in higher mountainous areas.

Luang Prabang is well-known for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) of Lao. It is home to a variety of architectural styles and historical buildings. The majority of traditional buildings are constructed from wood, while other structures are built from brick. There are also some structures built in the colonial style. These remarkable buildings often have one or two storeys with balconies as well as other decorative features made of wood. Luang Prabang’s status as a town of national and international cultural significance was confirmed by UNESCO when it was placed on the World Heritage list in 1995.

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<sup>10</sup> The terms secular and religious will be used several times in this introduction and throughout the thesis as a whole. In the past, the difference between the secular and the religious sphere was less pronounced, and at times it is perhaps not possible to distinguish between them at all. With the coming of modernity and the nation-state, however, this distinction becomes more important. As such, when these terms are used, one must always take into account the time-frame that is being discussed. Therefore, I use other expressions such “more secular in nature” or “strictly religious” in order to enable the reader to contextualize my use of these terms.

## 2. The Buddhist monks of Luang Prabang<sup>11</sup>

Like other Lao monks throughout the country (more specific details on the Lao Sangha will be presented in Chapter 2), the monks of present-day Luang Prabang are part of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization (LBFO). The LBFO is an organization that is supported by the state and has branches in every province of the country, as well as in the capital city of Vientiane. In this national administrative hierarchy, each district is named by adding the district's name to that of the LBFO, for example, the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization of Luang Prabang District. Single monasteries are named by placing “The Organization System of” (*labop kan chat tang vat* ລະບົບການຈັດຕັ້ງວັດ) in front of the monastery's name.

The above-mentioned information clearly shows that the current system of the LBFO reflects the secular nature of state administration as it consists of the same levels of administration: the centre, the province, the district, and the monastery. The boards of the administration of the LBFO for the centre, and province and district consist of a president, a vice-president, and a committee comprising a specific numbers of board members for each level. The board of administration of a monastery consists of the abbot and the vice-abbot, and sometimes a committee (R-LBFO07-08).

Like other members of the Lao Buddhist Sangha, its members in Luang Prabang, especially senior or highly esteemed monks, are by many Lao people considered as traditional intellectuals and spiritual advisors. They teach the *dhamma* and morally educate people in order to enable them to become human beings who act in responsible ways and lead meritorious lives.<sup>12</sup> It is also important to mention that in the past, as well as the present, the members of the Lao Buddhist Sangha have substantially expanded their roles, both at a national and international level. Not only do monks and monasteries function as a kind of a community centre, bringing together people of all social backgrounds and various ethnic groups, but they also cooperate with various governmental organizations. The Sangha, for example, co-operates closely with the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) on all levels in order to contribute to two main tasks, in essence, national unification and development of the country (R-LBFO07-08). In sum, the Lao Buddhist Sangha today fulfils a diverse range of tasks. Some of these are more related to the religious sphere, while other ones are of a more secular nature (see Chapter 2 for more details).

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<sup>11</sup> Some parts of this section were developed from a working paper written for DORISEA, no. 9, 2014, ISSN: 2196-6893.

<sup>12</sup> This is generally known in Lao: *pen khon di mi sintham* - ເປັນຄົນດີມີສິນທໍາ, or *pen phonlamüang di khòng sat lae pen sasanikason thi di khòng sasana*-ເປັນພົນລະເມືອງດີຂອງຊາດ ແລະເປັນສາສະນິກະຊົນທີ່ດີຂອງສາສະໜາ.

In order to contribute to the tasks mentioned above, most young men in Luang Prabang, upon reaching the age of twenty, traditionally become monks for a certain period of time in order to study Theravāda Buddhism and train themselves in the way of monastic life. Those under twenty can live in a monastery as novices as long as they wish provided they have their parents' permission. Both monks and novices live separately from their families at the temple after an ordination ceremony, and thus both are considered to be monastic members. They are supposed to spend their religious lives in the monastery to learn teachings and practices of Buddhism. Moreover, many acquire the artistic skills that are needed to preserve and maintain their monastery and its ritual objects. Thus, many monks are respected by laypeople, not only for being knowledgeable with regard to the teachings of Buddhism, but for having expertise in the fine arts as well.

While a number of monks decide that life in the monkhood suits them and choose to remain a monk for life, some people are only ordained for seven days. Men from the latter group return to secular life, live with their families, and take on normal occupations. Some of those who excelled in their training while in the Buddhist order later become artists, architects or local scholars after they disrobe. In Luang Prabang, a variety of former monks are considered to be master builders and craftsmen. The high status they are ascribed among the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang is based on the profound respect for the knowledge gained by people formerly ordained as monks. However, also in other cases, monks or novices who leave the monastery after many years can find the demands of secular life and the current job market somewhat demanding.

Up until the twentieth century, the number of monks and novices in Luang Prabang was quite high. They studied what today would be considered both religious and secular subjects. They copied, collected and read more doctrinally oriented religious texts in order to promote and preserve Buddhism. Moreover, some of them studied texts related to topics such as astrology, mathematics, magic or medicine. Therefore, it is not surprising that such a wide variety of manuscripts and texts, both religious and secular, were discovered post mortem in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan (1920–2007), the former President of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization of Luang Prabang province.

Some of the manuscripts mentioned above were produced according to the standards of more modern publications, using materials such as ballpoint pens, typewriters, computers, and correction fluid. Additionally, some of these were written by inserting what are clearly newly-fashioned expressions in their introductory and concluding remarks. Some expressions and materials used can, therefore, be said to reflect the socio-economic changes that have occurred. This indicates that the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang – including monks, novices, nuns, and laypeople – found ways to preserve their tradition of making manuscripts by applying new techniques and expressions under the conditions of



modernity (Chapter 5). This means that manifold methods and occasions for making these manuscripts have evolved. Sathu Nyai Khamchan himself sponsored – whether by writing, ordering, or initiating – the production of numerous palm-leaf manuscripts containing religious texts in commemoration of his birthday, a positive and productive example which has been followed by his disciples to this day.

A number of passages which were left in some manuscripts, and probably added at a later date, demonstrate that manuscripts in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were checked and updated by him on a regular basis. This procedure and his care clearly indicate that he was very concerned that, for example, longer manuscripts were arranged correctly. Manuscripts containing different versions of the same text posed a challenge to the reader if they were too long for a single fascicle. These fascicles might have become mixed up due to the inability of the scholar to distinguish one text from another. Therefore, when using any text which was written on more than one fascicle, it was necessary to make sure that they were derived from the same version.

From the observations regarding the manuscripts kept in his abode, it becomes clear that Sathu Nyai Khamchan was a manuscript maker, collector, and conservator. During his time in the monkhood (1941–2007), he regularly examined all of the manuscripts that came into his possession, first making sure they were in good condition, and then putting the folios into their correct order. After that, they were wrapped in cloth and kept in various cabinets in his abode. Thus, his tasks were similar to that of a researcher and librarian.

### **3. Sathu Nyai Khamchan<sup>13</sup>**

Sathu Nyai Khamchan was born in 1920 at Ban Lakkham (present-day Ban Vat Saen) of Luang Prabang. He was ordained as a novice in 1934 in his hometown, and a year later he left Luang Prabang for Bangkok to undertake higher Buddhist studies. He was ordained as a monk in Luang Prabang in 1941 and eight years later (1949) he was appointed the abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam. After that, he became the chief of the Sangha Organization of Luang Prabang province in 1954, a position he maintained until he passed away in 2007 (Pha One Keo and Khamvone 2011: 85).

As one of the eminent abbots and senior monks, Sathu Nyai Khamchan contributed to the preservation of the Buddhist tradition of Luang Prabang during his monkhood (1941– 2007). He was a fine example for others as he followed Buddhist teachings, and

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<sup>13</sup> For more details about Sathu Nyai Khamchan's biography, please see Khamvone (2015).

engaged in the construction and renovation of monastic buildings. An outstanding example of his daily activities was that he went on a daily alms round (Pali: *piṇḍacara*) to collect food (Pali: *piṇḍapāta* - literally meaning “food offered in the bowl” and popularly known in Lao as *pai binthabat* ໄປຍິນທະບາດ). In fact, *pai binthabat* is one of the thirteen practices of *Thutangkhavat* (thirteen ascetic practices). Sathu Nyai Khamchan might have aimed to follow one of these practices on a daily basis. The tradition of *pai binthabat* is generally perceived as giving laypeople the opportunity to make merit (Thongkham 2003: 608). Lao Buddhists in Luang Prabang preserve and carry on this tradition to the present day.

Sathu Nyai Khamchan served as a ritual and education centre for Lao Buddhists. Indeed, he was well known and respectable. He was frequently invited to preside over (*pen pha upatsa lae pen pathan* ເປັນພະອຸປັດຊາແລະເປັນປະທານ) numerous ordination ceremonies and traditional festivals throughout the country. Furthermore, he supported the education of monks and novices by organizing and improving the Sangha education in Luang Prabang. This ensured that monastic members under his tutelage acquired sufficient knowledge to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha. In addition, he sent his disciples abroad to study in India, Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand (Pha One Keo and Khamvone 2011: 85). He also visited many countries personally. On one especially notable occasion he travelled to India on pilgrimage in 1968. Like many other monks and laypeople, he visited places related to the Buddha’s life. He performed an act of paying respect to the Buddha meditating at Bodhgaya, the place of the Buddha’s Enlightenment (*Ibid.* p. 87).

Sathu Nyai Khamchan was one of senior monks and Buddhists in Luang Prabang who liked to make merit in the name of the deceased by initiating manuscript-making and the construction of monastic buildings. Colophons of seven manuscripts indicate that they were made by Sathu Nyai Khamchan in 1946 for the dedication of merit to Sathu Nyai Kaenchan, a former abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam. After that, (forty years later) Sathu Nyai Khamchan built a new abode in 1986. A dedicated note on a window reads, “ພ.ສ. ໒໕໒໙ ອຸທິດ ຫາສາທຸໄຫຍ່ແກ່ນຈັນ”, which literally means, “BE 2529 (AD 1986) dedicated to Sathu Nyai Kaenchan”. This indicates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan intended to perform an act of merit-making and acquired merit from making manuscripts and building an abode dedicated to the memory of a respected person.

With regard to tradition, Sathu Nyai Khamchan was an abbot who meticulously paid attention to the collection of cultural materials. He collected large numbers of manuscripts, photographs, books, printed materials, and Buddhist objects. This collection is an integral part of Luang Prabang’s cultural and intellectual Buddhist heritage. Four hundred and sixteen manuscripts (palm-leaf 330, paper 86) were found in his abode after he passed away. These manuscripts are the primary objects of this study. In addition, numerous

manuscripts that were found in three other monastic buildings in Vat Saen Sukharam are referred to as well.

#### **4. State of the art**

Until now there have been only very few scholarly works dealing with Lao manuscripts, and even less research has been done on manuscripts taken from the private collections of senior monks. In Luang Prabang and in Laos as a whole, most scholars usually focus on the contents of the main texts, transcribing the Tham-Lao or Lao Buan scripts in which they were written into modern Lao characters. This process often replaces the two older scripts with the current standard orthography. Some Lao scholars<sup>14</sup> have conducted comparative studies by collecting different versions of the same text in order to constitute a newly edited text, but often they have not applied the principles of textual criticism to their work. There are, nevertheless, some foreign scholars<sup>15</sup> who have studied not only the contents of manuscripts, but also the aims and motives behind manuscript-making itself, including the sponsors, scribes and materials which led to the creation of a manuscript. These works have had a valuable impact on my study of Sathu Nyai Khamchan's manuscript collection. As such, I have tried to apply these works in order to further the study of Lao manuscripts vis-a-vis their relationship to Lao society and manuscript culture as a whole.

Most Lao monks, who are believed to be very knowledgeable, learn from monks of an older generation. Studying this way demands a lot of patience from both monks and novices. Traditionally it is believed that they learn and follow the Buddha's teachings through this process of intergenerational exchange. This process also implies that they learn and practise according to the contents of manuscripts written by monks from previous periods. Sometimes they also become skilled at chanting religious texts by sitting with their masters and by precisely repeating their words. A major obligation of young monks and novices is to study; sometimes they must recite their lessons aloud until late at night (Somlit 1955: 76). Monks with a deep knowledge of Buddhist teachings, and who strictly adhere to the monastic rules, are recognized by Lao Buddhists as representations of the Buddha and his teachings (Nhouy 1959: 243). Buddhist monks are meant to purify themselves and devote their time and energy to the propagation of Buddhism. When devout laypeople see monks, it reminds them that even after the Buddha's "great

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<sup>14</sup> For more details, please see Samlit (1996); Literature Committee (1967) and Phouvong (1959).

<sup>15</sup> For more details, please see Hundius (1990) and McDaniel (2008, 2009).

extinction” – his passing away into *nibbāna* (ນິບພານ) – a long time ago, he is still represented by the Dhamma and the Sangha.

Similar to monks in other societies, the roles of the Buddhist monks of Luang Prabang, and of Laos as a whole, have evolved over time. In different historical periods, monks, as an important part of society, were not only responsible for following the monastic discipline, but also for being actively involved in social activities for the improvement of society (Seri 1988: 135–149). Consequently, the roles of monks have changed over time; sometimes they took on wider or more narrowly defined roles according to society’s demands. However, it is crucial to note that monks could not take on all of the roles occupied by laypeople. Doing so would imply that monks have the same roles as the laypeople, and that they perform tasks that are more secular than religious. With reference to the current period, Donald Swearer posits that: “Today, if monks are perceived primarily as political manipulators or performing roles in society that are perceived as secular rather than religious, then they run the risk of undermining the symbolic status according to the sangha as an embodiment and propagator of the Buddha’s Dhamma” (Swearer 1995: 132).

In practice, numerous monks and novices have no intention of living in a monastery throughout their lives. They prefer to return to secular lives when their period of training at the monastery has come to an end. Consequently, Lao monasteries play an important role in the general education of young Lao males. In fact, a number of Buddhist schools have functioned and continue to function alongside state schools.<sup>16</sup> Lao people consider a person who has been in the monkhood for a period of time as an educated figure of society, even if they were only ever a novice (although former monks receive more recognition of this trait). They are viewed as well-educated or ordained people (*khon suk* ຄົນສຸກ – literally “a ripe person”) whereas those who have not been ordained are classified as somehow uneducated in the sense of not being ripe (*khon dip* ຄົນດິບ – literally “a raw person”). Therefore, not only does the monastery function as a religious structure, it also serves as an educational centre for the community or village. The monastery can additionally function as a warehouse for the village, as its forum and community centre, or as a shelter for travellers, among others (Condominas 1975: 254). With regard to the latter functions, the mixing of the secular and religious spheres becomes clear.

Generally, monks and novices first study and train themselves in the ways of the Buddha, and only then educate other people through preaching. Here, the ways of preaching should be discussed briefly because monks have been honoured not only as

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<sup>16</sup> For more details see documents nos. BAD-12-2-1984.13; BAD-12-2-1984.14; BAD-12-2-1985.02.

preachers, but also poets and writers. This implies that, in former times, traditional ways of preaching, for instance simply reading texts composed in prose, were not, in some cases, sufficiently interesting to attract the attention of laypeople. To respond to such inadequacies, monks had to discover new ways of preaching in order to appeal to their Buddhist communities. One interesting type of preaching that came into fashion in consequence was rhythmic preaching. Preaching in the form of rhyme strongly relies on texts that have a flowing rhyme, for example, texts composed in verse form, or containing at least one feature of poetic rules. The preaching of the story of Vessantara is a good example. It was composed in verse and needs to be recited by a monk or a novice with a charming voice, so that it sounds lively, and thereby attracts a greater number of listeners (Chapter 3). In other words, Lao monks dedicated to the propagation of Buddhism also had to learn to compose Buddhist texts in verse form, thus ascribing them the dual role of preacher and poet (Deegalle 2003: 151).

Despite the tremendous efforts one has to make to learn these techniques, training to become a Buddhist poet does have its benefits. To be recognized as an expert, a monk must be well-versed not only in the techniques and skills of poetry, but also in the general teachings of Buddhism. In earlier times, such teachings might have been traditionally preached only in Pali or in Sanskrit. Even today, a variety of Buddhist texts thought to relate to auspicious matters (Pali: *maṅgala*) are still chanted in Pali – and the recitation of the translations of such texts in ritual ceremonies is considered inefficacious. Nowadays, Buddhist monks in Laos do not completely follow the ways of preaching used in ancient times. Today they must study both poetic manuals as well as dictionaries of Pali and Sanskrit in-depth in order to understand the teachings in their original language. They then compose Buddhist texts by combining their own language with the words derived from these languages in order to successfully transmit the teachings that they have interpreted to laypeople. This has to be done in a manner that will stimulate the attention of audience. Furthermore, the composition of texts through the combination of Lao, Pali and Sanskrit words can also be seen in various magical formulae (Pali: *gāthā*; see Chapter 4).

Many monks were also devout scribes and compilers. Indeed, according to Koret (1999: 229):

The monks at the temples are not expected to write literature but they are expected to copy it. Classes are taught in religious script that is used to record the stories. The process of transcribing is learned by observing one who is experienced in the skill. It is in the scribing, where the only preparation deemed necessary is to learn how to write the alphabet and hold the stylus that the creative process goes on.

A number of monks have also trained themselves to write on palm-leaf and other materials. This is, perhaps, partially due to their belief that making a fascicle bearing a Buddhist text can bring them much merit and propagate Buddhism.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, various types of Buddhist texts written on palm-leaf, mulberry paper, and other materials can be found at the residences of abbots and senior monks, or in temple libraries (*hò tai* ຫໍໄຕ) located inside monasteries and museums throughout the country. Therefore, the recent discovery of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts in Sathu Nhai Khamchan's abode and in four other monasteries in Luang Prabang (including information relating to the collections<sup>18</sup>) is perhaps not as surprising as one might think at first glance.

As mentioned above, monks cannot be separated from their lay Buddhist community. Furthermore, they respond to social demands by seeking out and selecting those parts of the Buddha's teachings which can be applied to the problems of local people. This is similar to McDaniel's (2008: 110) argument that, "Instead of transmitting an integral and received tradition, they took bits and pieces of the received tradition in service of their own local rituals, ethics, and social concerns." He came to this conclusion after studying manuscripts and Buddhist education in Northern Thailand and Laos taught through *nissaya*, *vohāra* and *nāmasadda* texts.

One area which is commonly recognized as an appropriate task for monks and novices is the teaching of both religious and non-religious subjects. Certainly, monks and novices are required to have sufficient knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They impart knowledge to people and are, therefore, called *khu* (ຄູ – "teacher") or *achan* (ອາຈານ – "teacher, lecturer, professor, tutor, instructor; in brief, a title of respect for learned person"). People often choose to send their children to serve the cause of Buddhism as "monastic disciples" (ລູກສິດ/ສັງກະລີ). In this way, Nhouy notes (1959: 251) that: "With the child in the hands of the monk, the parents are relieved of any care, not only regarding his immediate fortune, but also regarding his future lives." In former times, a child who was sent to a monastery to live as a monastic disciple could then be ordained as a novice. If he was satisfied with life as a novice, and he exhibited good behaviour, it would earn him the respect of people of all generations, praising him as someone who was "ordained from early childhood". Such a novice is invited to re-ordain as a monk when he reaches the age of twenty. Most likely, all of the people in the village would donate to his ordaining

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<sup>17</sup> In Laos, gaining merit through the production of manuscripts is highly regarded, not only by monks, but also by devout laypeople.

<sup>18</sup> For more details see manuscripts nos. BAD-13-1-0057, BAD-13-1-0082, BAD-13-1-0160, BAD-13-1-0218, BAD-13-1-0289, BAD-13-1-0330; BAD-13-2-003, BAD-13-2-007, BAD-13-2-042, BAD-13-2043, BAD 13-2-054, BAD-13-2-059.

ceremony. After becoming a fully ordained monk, he would also become an intellectual figure of the community and gain a significant amount of honour and prestige.

Importantly, numerous villages (*ban* ບ້ານ) and monasteries (*vat* ວັດ) have the same or similar names. This can be seen in the town of Luang Prabang and throughout the country. There are two different categories for village names: 1) the village and monastery have the same name such as Ban/Vat Aphay, Ban/Vat Chum Khòng, Ban/Vat Xiang Thòng, and so forth; and 2) the temple name is used as the name of the village, such as Ban Vat Nòng, Ban Vat Saen, and Ban Vat That, among others. However, above all, according to Condominas (1975: 254): “the monastery is an expression and a symbol of the village unit, for in most cases the village has either conferred its name on the monastery or taken its name from it.” This strongly indicates that Lao monks and laypeople have a long tradition of coexisting as a united community with the preservation and propagation of Buddhism as their common goal.

Compared to laypeople, monks and novices have many more opportunities to obtain knowledge and greater access to educational facilities. This was especially true in the past when the secular or state school system was very limited. Being able to recite basic Buddhist texts and read a variant of Dhamma script – traditionally known in Lao as *thet dai sut dai* (ເທດໄດ້ສູດໄດ້) – are considered common skills for a newly-ordained monk or novice. Indeed, these are compulsory tasks alongside their other duties.<sup>19</sup> Being literarily inclined, moreover, and especially being skilled in one’s mother tongue and versed in Pali or Buddhist teachings, is also a very important trait for monks (Nhouy 1959: 253). Although active knowledge of Pali was in the past probably more the exception than the rule, the language still maintains an important role in various ritual ceremonies even today. This is similar to McDaniel’s observation in the region of Northern Thailand and in Laos. Here, a person who is highly knowledgeable of technical terms derived from Pali or Sanskrit, or a person who can translate and explain the meaning of “complicated” words, is able to gain much honour and respect from the local people, especially from those devoted to Buddhism (McDaniel 2008: 117).

Monks and novices have to learn Buddhist texts by heart, especially those texts which are thought to be particularly auspicious. This process is referred to as “knowledge

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<sup>19</sup> Monks and novices should not revoke their education, but have to improve their knowledge according to the demands of the society. This means their studies have to consist of the Buddhist teachings and secular subjects. This has been expressed in the past through the phrase *hu thang thang lok thang tham/hu khadi lok khadi tham* (ຮູ້ທັງທາງໂລກທາງທຳ / ຮູ້ຄະດີໂລກຄະດີທຳ), which means, “know both secular affairs and Buddhist doctrine.” This reflects how monks are required to have various types of knowledge to function as the centre of ritual for the community.

acquired by hearing” or *sota-viññāṇa* (Lao: *sota-vinnyan* ໂສຕະວິນຍານ). This means a learner must listen carefully to a text spoken aloud by a teacher and then repeat it many times until it has been memorized. If unable to do so, the student is not permitted to take part in recitations during Buddhist rites and ceremonies. In other words, they are unable to fulfil their role as traditional intellectuals in their Buddhist community. This, in turn, demonstrates that they are incapable of carrying out the task of disseminating Buddhism. They may then be viewed by others as obstructing the proper spread of the religion, which is known in Lao by the Pali term *māra – sāsana* (Lao: *man-sasana* ມານສາສະໜາ). In consequence, their lack of awareness of Buddhist teachings may obstruct them from practising as an honoured Buddhist disciple. As a result, laypeople then might lose their faith and this may make it more difficult for Buddhism to flourish for the predicted period of 5000 years. One example of this concern, a short passage that appears in a fascicle of palm-leaf manuscript BAD-13-1-0221 entitled Mahavibak (Pali: *mahāvīpāka* Result of accumulated merits and sins), is quoted below. It can be understood to express the feelings of a Buddhist devotee of Luang Prabang – probably a senior monk who was very concerned with the continuation of Buddhism. The manuscript is dated Chulasakarāt (CS)<sup>20</sup> 1302 (AD 1940) and was found in Sathu Nhai Khamchan’s abode. The text reads:

ຍາມຈັກຫາຜູ້ເອົາໃຈໃສ່ວັດວາອາຮາມ ແລະຄຸນແກ້ວ ມ ປະການກໍບໍ່ມີສັກ(ຈັກ)ຄົນແລ  
ຫົນພາຍໃນພິກຂຸ ແລະສໍາມະເນນ(ສາມະເນນ)ກໍບໍ່ຢູ່ຕາມຄອງ.

When looking for a person who really made an effort to care for the monastery and uphold the Triple Gem, not many were to be found. Some monks and novices within the monastic community do not follow the tradition.

Alongside the above-mentioned knowledge, the study and, more broadly speaking, experience in reading the variants of the Dhamma script are also considered of crucial importance for monks and novices. This ability is referred to as “knowledge acquired by vision” or *cakkhu-viññāṇa* (Lao: *chakkhu-vinnyan* ຈັກຊຸວິນຍານ). Generally, the way of learning how to read variants of the Dhamma script is similar to the method used to learn Buddhist teachings by heart. A learner must carefully read a text passage from a palm leaf, while the teacher reads aloud, repeating it over and over until it has been memorized in its entirety. Historical evidence indicates that in the past monks and novices who followed the

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<sup>20</sup> There are numerous viewpoints concerning the founder of Chulasakarāt or Minor Era, but this era is considered to start at AD 638. For more details about its origin, see Eade, John Christophe (1995) and Chao Phetsarat (2001: 37–42).



traditional way of learning in monasteries never really “officially” completed their studies. In contrast to today’s monastic training, McDaniel (2009: 136) explains that:

The training at these monasteries was non-standardized. Orthography, colophon styles, votive declarations, choice of what text to copy or sponsor, and vocabulary in manuscripts all point to highly independent teachers and students whose training was more organic than systematic. There seems to have been no standard as to when a novice or monk was considered “trained.” There seems to have been no standard examination system, and there is no evidence of social events like “graduation.”

The need for monks and novices to be well-versed in Buddhist teachings and scriptures stems from the Buddhist belief that newly-ordained monks and novices who cannot learn to preach and chant simply have an insufficient amount of merit for ordination.<sup>21</sup> Here, an ordinary performance for learning these subjects should be briefly discussed: A student has to show his respect to the Buddha before reading and reciting some variants of the Dhamma script and religious texts. He does so by prostrating himself three times. Sometimes the performance of paying respect is directed at the teacher with whom one is learning. Such actions are an indication that the learner exhibits the right behaviour and conduct and, therefore, is suitable for propagating Buddhism later in life.

Investigating the knowledge of monks without discussing their abilities to produce scholarly writings is somewhat atypical for the Buddhist Sangha. Numerous unidentified monks, whose works still remain a part of academic debates even today, are also honoured as writers. They were very knowledgeable and acquired much respect from the Buddhist community at the time. Their works covered various fields of studies including, inter alia history, literature, law, and linguistics. McDaniel (2009: 135) contends that manuscript libraries throughout Northern Thailand and Laos contain both religious and secular manuscripts. He further demonstrates that some manuscripts are entitled in Pali, but the texts begin with a line in Pali and are then followed by a vernacular language explanation. As for secular texts, he states, “these secular texts are often bound with Pali and vernacular ‘religious’ texts. These genres are so mixed (as we will see below) that dividing them along secular/religious lines is untenable.” A number of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts

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<sup>21</sup> It is believed that a newly-ordained monk or novice who cannot learn to preach and chant (ຮຽນເທດຮຽນສູດ ບໍ່ໄດ້) does not have enough merit to live in a monastery as an ordained one. In Lao, the term *bun buat bô mi* (ບຸນບວດບໍ່ມີ) is used to describe such individuals.

found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode at Vat Saen Sukharam in Luang Prabang are good examples reflecting this matter.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from writing and compiling manuscripts, the acquisition of Buddhist antiques and valuable objects should also be recognized as another important task related to the preservation of knowledge by the monastics of Luang Prabang. A number of Buddhist materials – Buddha statues, manuscripts which contain Buddhist texts and various texts on topics such as traditional medicine and astrology, among others – can often be found inside a monk's living quarters, especially those of senior monks. These objects are not built and/or gathered all at once, but rather they accumulate over the years, and are sometimes even passed down through the generations. Of these, the manuscripts containing Buddhist teachings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. They were not only created because a donor asked for them, or because monks specifically wished to contribute to the preservation of Buddhism, but sometimes they were written for the acknowledgement and celebration of significant occasions.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, numerous manuscripts recently found in five monasteries of Luang Prabang town reveal that some Buddhist texts have been combined with Lao words to create magical formulas (BAD-13-1-0080, BAD-13-2-008). This may be interpreted as one specific way to disseminate the Dhamma in which monks try to enable common people to understand Buddhist teachings through very “practical” aspects related to protection, invulnerability and good luck. Here they use words from the common vernacular to (directly or indirectly) find ways to connect the teachings of Buddhism to the traditional beliefs of common people. In short, they then combine words from the common vernacular with beliefs, expressions and teachings from a Buddhist perspective. By employing such methods, Dhamma or Buddhist teachings become considerably easier to understand for common people (for more details, see Chapter 4).

Lao Buddhist monks have long been engaged in the practice of poetic composition. Consequently, a number of Buddhist manuscripts written in the language of Lao combining words that originate from Pali and/or Sanskrit can be found in numerous monasteries throughout the country. These texts were principally written in Tham-Lao script (*Lao: to tham / aksòn tham* ໂຕທຳ/ອັກສອນທຳ) and, of course, in verse form. The legend of Khun Burom and the Vessantara Jātaka or the story of *phavet* are good examples. The former is said to have been composed by two senior monks called

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<sup>22</sup> For more details see McDaniel 2009: 124–139 and manuscripts BAD-13-1-0297, BAD-13-1-0300, BAD-13-1-0315, BAD-13-1-0331.

<sup>23</sup> For more details see manuscripts BAD-13-1-0008, BAD-13-1-0013, BAD-13-1-0128, BAD-13-10157, BAD-13-1-0160, BAD-13-1-0163, BAD-13-1-0208, BAD-13-1-0287.

Pha Maha Thepluang and Pha Maha Mungkhun Sitthi (Maha Sila 2001: 62) and the legend of Khun Burom should be considered as a text that is a traditional historical source because it deals with a person who first established *müang* Lao, while the latter is classified as a literary work.

Both of the religious and secular stories mentioned above were written by senior Buddhist monks. In particular, the information in the legend of Khun Burom mentioned in Maha Sila's work reads:

ຕໍານານຂຸນບໍລົມອັນນີ້ ພະມະຫາເທບຫຼວງເຈົ້າ ຕົນເປັນທໍາມະເສນາຕົນພີ່ ຢູ່ວັດວິຊຸນ ທັງ  
ມະຫາມຸງຄຸນສິດທິເຈົ້າ ຕົນເປັນສັງຄະເສນາຕົນນ້ອງ ທັງເຈົ້າແຜ່ນດິນ ແລະເສນາທັງຫຼາຍ  
ພ້ອມກັນກັນແປງໄວ້

This Legend of Khun Burom was compiled by Phra Maha Thep Luang, Dhamma Sena, the elder compiler, of Vat Visun, and Maha Mungkhun Siddhi, Sangha Sena, the younger compiler, together with the king and all *senā* (high-ranking officials) (Maha Sila 2001: 62).

This information indicates that the legend was created by religious senior monks in collaboration with the king and other high-ranking officials. This demonstrates that even in the distant past Lao monks were revered as knowledgeable figures not only in regard to religious, but also secular matters.<sup>24</sup>

Nowadays, one of the requirements for the development of the nation of Lao can be seen in the training of various kinds of intellectuals and experts.<sup>25</sup> This is also valid for monks and novices. Those who do wish to act as spiritual leaders of Buddhist communities have clearly defined tasks such as preservation and practice of the Buddha's Teachings and contribution to the education of people. In fact, simply being aware of general religious matters and basic secular subjects is inadequate for monastic members. Monks and novices now are expected to know much more about modern technologies, including how to apply such techniques to the production of manuscripts. The introduction of new techniques resulted in a number of manuscripts that were made by typing with a typewriter, or were sometimes written and corrected with various colour ballpoint pens. Several examples of

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<sup>24</sup> The first version of the legend of Khun Burom was written during the reign of King Visun (1500–1520). Buddhism flourished and a number of Buddhist scholars took interest in literary works under his rule (Maha Sila 2001: 61–62).

<sup>25</sup> This is commonly expressed in Lao as ບຸກຄະລາກອນທີ່ມີຄວາມຮູ້ໃນຂະແໜງການຕ່າງໆ, meaning “personnel with different categories of knowledge” (Ministry of Planning and Investment ກະຊວງແຜນການ ແລະການລົງທຶນ 2011: 127–128).

such cases can be seen in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode, and in other monasteries in Luang Prabang.

Studying foreign languages such as English, French, and Chinese, is also considered an important tool for monastics, especially for those who would like to communicate with other Buddhist communities beyond their home country. Therefore, when words from foreign languages sometimes appear in various manuscripts found in the abode of an eminent abbot, it is not as unusual as it may seem at first (see chapter 5 for further details).<sup>26</sup> At present, monks and novices not only study at the Sangha schools and colleges or religious institutes for higher education, but also in secular schools and universities. This practice is becoming increasingly common.

## 5. Research purpose and methodology

As noted, the core of this study consists of an analysis of the data collected from various manuscripts recently found in five monasteries in Luang Prabang town. Of them, Vat Saen Sukharam – a residence of the former eminent abbot, Sathu Nyai Khamchan – is a corpus which comprises more than four hundred manuscripts. These manuscripts contain both religious and secular texts covering the main sources of knowledge for Lao Buddhist monks. Furthermore, some of these manuscripts include not only the main texts and stories, but also various passages that were added later by the collector or another writer.

Vat Saen Sukharam used to be the seat of the former President of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization (LBFO) of Luang Prabang province, Sathu Nyai Khamchan. Not only did this *vat* serve as the residence of the former President of the LBFO of this province, it became a centre for the collection of manuscripts. Many of these might not have been incorporated into the corpus of projects such as the “Inventory of Palm-leaf Manuscripts in Six Provinces of Laos” and “The Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme”.<sup>27</sup> This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that after he passed away in

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<sup>26</sup> For more details, see manuscripts nos. BAD-13-1-0002, BAD-13-1-0014, BAD-13-1-0015, BAD-13-1-0017, BAD-13-1-0023, BAD-13-1-0032, BAD-13-1-0107, BAD-13-1-0108, BAD-13-1-0109, BAD-13-1-0110, BAD-13-1-0111, BAD-13-1-0112, BAD-13-1-0178, BAD-13-1-0186, BAD-13-2-010, BAD-13-2-060.

<sup>27</sup> The project Inventory of Palm-leaf Manuscripts in Six Provinces of Laos (IPMSPL), supported by the Toyota Foundation of Japan, was carried out during 1988–1994. Luang Prabang was one of the six provinces covered by this project. In a similar vein, the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme (PLMP) was another project – supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its cultural assistance programme – conducted from 1992 to 2002. This programme covered every province throughout the country. Both the IPMSPL and the PLMP were under the supervision of the Lao

2007, the manuscripts collected in his domicile were not inventoried. The manuscripts located here were stored in Western style cabinets. In addition to these manuscripts, a number of manuscripts were stored in an ordination hall (*sim* ສິມ), the sermon hall of a temple (*sala hong tham* ສາລາໂຮງທໍາ) and a museum (*phiphithaphan* ພິພິທະພັນ). These also have not yet been surveyed and archived.

Interestingly, the personal collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan comprises not only numerous manuscripts, but also a variety of modern publications and printed materials which may have influenced the content found in some specific manuscripts (see Chapter 5). This also shows that his abode served as a centre for storing both religious as well as secular knowledge, and that he himself acted as a sort of librarian. However, after Sathu Nyai Khamchan passed away in 2007, the manuscripts in his collection were not preserved as quickly as they should have been. In consequence, some of them became damaged due to a variety of different causes. This damage is similar to Agrawal's (1982: 85) description of the "various types of deterioration defects that develop in palm-leaf manuscripts. The main [types] are: stains and spots, discolouration of the ink, insect damage, damage due to fungus, loss of flexibility, [and] splitting of the various layers of the palm-leaves." Furthermore, a number of loose manuscripts surfaced when the research team – led by Professor Volker Grabowsky – of the BMBF (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung) supported project *The Lao Sangha and Modernity: A Buddhist Archive in Luang Prabang* started to survey the collections here in March 2012.

## Aims of the study

The main purpose of this study is to survey, identify, and analyse the content of manuscripts and specific passages that reflect both the religious and secular knowledge of the Buddhist monks in Luang Prabang. It is the author's hope that the results of this study will be able to adequately answer the following research questions:

- What kind of knowledge do the monks and novices possess, and how do they acquire or transmit this knowledge?
- Why do laypeople acknowledge the wisdom of monks and novices who have gained non-religious knowledge?

To answer these questions, the following goals are to be achieved:

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Ministry of Information and Culture (presently known as the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism).

- To survey, rescue, study and preserve the manuscripts collected and/or written by the senior monk Sathu Nyai Khamchan. The study also aims to detail information regarding the private collections of manuscripts for those with a general interest in manuscripts.

- To study the basic requirements of behaviour and knowledge that monks and novices are expected to fulfil. To present the knowledge of religious and secular subjects learnt by Buddhist monks and novices which are reflected in the manuscripts;

- To explore the relationships among Lao Buddhists and their ways of disseminating and propagating Buddhist teachings in Luang Prabang by initiating the production of manuscripts;

- To present different ways of studying manuscripts by reading/interpreting and analysing information that is not directly derived from the main texts. This relates to information, for example, regarding donors, the purpose of the manuscript, the occasion for producing it, and the support used for writing and making the manuscript itself;

- To discuss the traditional methods of learning how to read and write the various variants of the Dhamma script, to chant religious texts in Pali, and to transmit knowledge about Buddhism and other subjects;

- To discuss the introduction of modern writing techniques into manuscript-making processes.

## Approach and Methodology

First of all, this study is conducted alongside the BMBF supported project *The Lao Sangha and Modernity: a Buddhist Archive in Luang Prabang*, which is based on extended fieldwork in five monasteries of Luang Prabang: Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS), Vat Suvanna Khili (VSK), Vat Xiang Muan (VXM), Vat Pak Khan (VPK), and Vat Xiang Thòng (VXT).

All manuscripts – including single folios, fascicles/bundles of palm-leaf, folded books of manuscripts, and so forth – that were collected and stored in Sathu Nhai Khamchan’s domicile in Vat Saen Sukharam were examined in order to define their condition and value.

Single palm leaves, groups of loose palm leaves or loose manuscripts were re-strung according to their physical and textual characteristics. The newly-strung manuscripts, together with the selected manuscripts and printed materials collected and stored in the archives, were surveyed and then registered or archived according to their features.

Palm-leaf manuscripts written in variants of the Dhamma script and the old Lao script, mulberry-paper manuscripts written in a variety of scripts, and *khòì* paper manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai's abode were photographed or scanned. These were then collated and made into a catalogue. The manuscripts written with modern paper and numerous fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts typed in modern Lao via a typewriter were subject to the same processes.

The ten components of complete manuscripts (material, introductory text, colophon, year, script, language, scribe, donor, title, and remarks) were catalogued, whereas five items of incomplete manuscripts were inventoried (material, script, language, title, and remarks). This catalogue was used as the database from which much of the information for this dissertation is drawn.

Apart from the manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, a variety of manuscripts bearing Buddhist and more secular texts that were kept in three other places in Vat Saen Sukharam (an ordination hall, sermon hall, and museum) were also selected and used for this study.

Various types of manuscripts with colophons, tables, images, and notes or remarks containing valuable information on matters related to the topic of this study were investigated carefully.

Most Lao words associated with Buddhism are derived from Pali and/or Sanskrit. Wherever words are of Pali and/or Sanskrit origin and therefore require additional explanation, the roots of such words will be romanized following the orthography of Pali and/or Sanskrit. Furthermore, they are written in italics and placed in parentheses. For instance, the first sermon of the Buddha, *thammachak* (Pali: *dharmacakka*); the cycle of rebirth, *songsan* (Pali: *samsāra*); Noble Truths, *ariyasat* (Pali: *ariyasacca*); an act or ceremony performed by Buddhist monks in a temple assembly of four or more monks, *sanghakam* (Pali: *saṅghakamma*), great monk, *mahathera* (Pali: *mahāthera*), and so forth.

Some words that originate from both Pali and Sanskrit. These words which have similar pronunciation or orthography have been transliterated as needed using the common spellings. If they have different spellings or pronunciations, then the Sanskrit orthography will be preferred over the Pali. For instance, auspicious moment, *lük* (Sanskrit: *ṛkṣa*); art, handicraft, *silapa* (Sanskrit: *śilpa*); science, *sat* (Sanskrit: *śāstra*); study, *süksa* (Sanskrit: *śikṣa*), etcetera.

Proper names and/or words commonly in use are retained in their accepted orthography. However, some may appear with multiple spellings, one indicating the popular form and the other showing the phonetic transcription. For instance, ຫຼວງພະບາງ will appear as Luang Prabang and *luang pha bang* depending on the context.

Whenever Lao words and expressions are needed, they are transcribed into the Roman alphabet and then, only in the first occurrence, followed by the Lao script of the same word, as well as the English translation or explanation. Although vowel-length has not been preserved in the transliterations, it is hoped that the inclusion of the Lao script will help to clear up any ambiguities that this may cause.<sup>28</sup> For instance, manuscript-making (*kan sang nangsi* ການສ້າງໜັງສື) stylus (*lek chan* ເຜັ້ກຈານ), holding string (*sai sanong* ສາຍສະໜອງ), wooden protectors for taking care of manuscripts or (*mai pakap* ໄມ້ປະກັບ), among others.

Some parts of the original texts are translated into English in order to make them more accessible for interpretation. Supplementary information is placed in square brackets. For instance, ...*phutthang at thammang at sangkhang at...* is translated as: [I pray to the] Buddha [to help me to] close [my mind to the opposite opinion]. [I pray to the] Dhamma [to help me to] close [my mind to the opposite opinion]. [And I pray to the] Saṅgha [to help me to] close [my mind to the opposite opinion].

Finally, texts which were originally written in variants of the Dhamma script frequently contain various abbreviations and conflation of words, *kham nyò* (ຄໍາຫຍໍ້). Occasionally, these words are transcribed into Roman characters and the transcriptions are the same form of full words.

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<sup>28</sup> As for the Lao language, the short and long durations of pronunciations of a word differ greatly in their meanings. In other words, any vowel used in a word could change its meaning just by altering the duration of the air sent out of the lungs, both shorter or longer. For instance, *kan* could mean “to keep out, to stop, to prevent; all; I, me” by shortening the sound of the /a/. However, it can also mean “to cut, to chop; work; time” by lengthening the sound of the /a/. However, the transcription used in this study will not completely follow this method, rather Lao scripts are used to define meaning instead.



Table 1.1: Transcription-1

### Vowels

Lao		Romanization
າະ – ຳາ	າ	a
ີ	ີ	i
ື	ື	ü
ຸ	ຸ	u
າະ – ເື້າ	າ	e
ແາະ – ແື້າ	ແາ	ae
ໂາະ – ໂື້າ – ໂື້າ	ໂາ	o
າາະ – ຳອາ	ໍາ, ຳອາ	ò

Lao		Romanization
ເື້	ເື້	oe
ເື້ຍ – ຳງາ	າຍ – ຳງາ	ia
ືວະ – ຳວາ	ືວ – ຳວາ	ua
ເື້ອ	ເື້ອ	üa
ໂາ – ໂາ		ai
ເື້າ		ao
ໍາ		am

### Consonants

Lao	Romanization	
	Initial consonants	Final consonants
ກ	k	k
ຂ – ຄ	kh	–
ຫງ – ງ	ng	ng
ຈ	ch	–
ສ – ຊ	s	–
ຫຍ – ຍ	ny	i
ດ	d	t
ຕ	t	–
ຖ – ທ	th	–
ໜ – ນ	n	n

Lao	Romanization	
	Initial consonants	Final consonants
ບ	b	p
ປ	p	–
ຜ – ຝ	ph	–
ຟ – ຟ	f	–
ໝ – ມ	m	m
ຢ	y	–
ຫຼ – ລ	l	–
ຫວ – ວ	v	o
ຫ – ຮ	h	–
ອ	– / (?)	–

#### Consonant cluster

Lao		Romanization		Remark
	ຕົວຢ່າງ		Example	
ວ	ໄກວ	w	kwai	to swing, sway; move
ກວ	ແຂວງ	khw	khwaeng	province
ຄວ	ຄວາຍ	khw	khwai	water buffalo
ຊວ	ຊວ້ານ	sw	swan	shovel; to shovel
ອວ	ອວ້າຍ	ʔw	ʔwai	to turn

Table 1.2: Transcription-2

Scripts					Scripts				
Tham-Lao		Roman	Lao		Tham-Lao		Roman	Lao	
Script	Sup- and superscript		Script	Sup- and superscript	Script	Sup- and superscript		Script	Sup- and superscript
ດ	/	k	ກ	ກ	ດ	ຸ	dh	ຸ	ຸ
ຂ	ຸ	gh	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	n	ນ	ນ
ຄ	ຸ	ñ	ງ	ຸ	ປ	ປ	p	ປ	ປ
	ຸ			ຸ					
ອ	ຸ	c	ຈ	ຈ	ຸ	ຸ	ph	ຸ	ຸ
ຂ	ຸ	ch	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ/ອ	b	ພ	ພ
ຊ	ຸ	j	ຸ	ຸ	ກ		bh	ພ	—
ຊ	ຸ	jh	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	m	ມ	ມ
ຮ	ຸ	ñ	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	ຸ	y	ຸ	ຸ
ຮ		t	ຸ	—	ຸ		r	ຸ	—
ຮ	ຸ	th	ຸ	ຸ	ໂ		r	ຸ	—
ຮ		d	ດ	—	ຸ	ຸ	l	ລ	ລ
ປ	ຸ	dh	ດ	ຸ	ຸ		!	ຸ	
ຸ		ຸ	ນ	—	ຸ	ຸ	s	ສ	ສ
ຸ	ຸ	th	ຸ	ຸ	°		m	ຸ	—
ຸ		ññ		ຸຸ	ຸ		l	ລ	
ຸ		ss		ສສ	ຸ		ò	ອ	
ຸ		y		ຸ	(...)		a	ຸ	
ຸ		s		ສ	ໂ		a	າ	
ຸ		d		ດ	ຸ/ຸ		ae	ແ	
ຸ		n		ນ	ໂ		o	ໂ	
ຸ		m		ມ	ໂ		òì	ອຍ	

## 6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis comprises six chapters. The first chapter is written as an introduction, and the last one as a conclusion. Chapter 2 discusses two official introductions of Buddhism to the Kingdom of Lan Xang and the spread of Buddhism among the Lao thereafter. It also discusses the Lao Sangha and its tasks, as well as Lao manuscripts. In this chapter, I propose that Lao Buddhists of former times used both palm leaves and paper as material for the production of manuscripts. The contents of these manuscripts relate to various subjects, but they can be summarized into two main types of knowledge pertaining to Buddhism and then more secular subjects such as Buddhist chronicle and philology. Moreover, the means of writing and producing manuscripts has changed over time, which has attracted both Lao and foreign scholars to study of Lao manuscripts.

In Chapter 3, selected manuscripts containing texts that pertain to the Buddha's teachings, monastic regulations and religious occurrences are discussed. In this chapter, I discuss a number of manuscripts that contain Jataka stories or the story of former births of the Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be) that were kept in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. I will here show that this category of texts is greater than any of other categories (Table 2.6). The Vessantara Jataka (the story of Prince Vessantara), one of texts that is placed in this category, is compiled in verse form and often copied over time. Consequently, a number of versions were produced. The differences between these versions can be discerned by examining each version's introductory text and concluding remarks. Furthermore, the story of Prince Vessantara is a long account with each of the thirteen parts possessing its own title such as Thatsaphòn, Himmaphan and Thanakhan amongst others.

Chapter 3 will also investigate the fact that a number of *Anisong* manuscripts were produced for the commemoration of Sathu Nyai Chamchan's birthday, especially when he was twenty-four years old. Therefore, this chapter discusses the structure, contents and usage of *Anisong* texts. With regard to the language, its expressions and the tools that were applied for writing texts in this category, I will examine some specific *Anisong* texts which exhibit the influence of modern writing techniques. In addition, some titles of *Anisong* texts – such as Sòng Sala (“The merit gained from building a pavilion”), Sòng Khua (“The merit gained from building a bridge”) and *Anisong* Het Bun Van Koet (The merit gained from organizing a birthday celebration) – reflect the socio-economic changes that occurred during these periods of history.

Chapter 4 discusses and analyses a variety of texts that can be found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection. As a manuscript collection of a senior monk, it comprises not only content strictly related to Buddhism, but also manuscripts that can be considered more secular in content. The contents of these manuscripts relate to many subjects such as

astrology, philology, history, medicine, and magic. In Chapter 4, selected secular manuscripts will be discussed, thus demonstrating that monks and novices are required to be knowledgeable about many subjects, especially those related to laypeople's way of living and cultivation. Chapter 4, therefore, demonstrates the value and importance of secular manuscripts.

In chapter 5, I will present some manuscripts (both religious and more secular ones) kept in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode that were influenced by modern techniques of writing and text composition. Some texts were written on palm leaves in three columns, which differ from those written in lines from the left margins to the right margins. Furthermore, some manuscripts contain a number of corrections, newly added text and novel passages. Finally, some of the manuscripts were produced by using modern tools.

## Chapter 2

### Overview

At the time the Kingdom of Lan Xang was founded in AD 1353, most inhabitants in the kingdom were not Buddhists but animists. Six years later, Buddhism was introduced into the kingdom and the number of Buddhist scholars, both monks and laypeople increased. This chapter discusses three main topics: Lao Buddhism, the Lao Buddhist Sangha and Lao manuscript culture such as writing materials, scripts, and sponsors amongst others.

### 1. Lao Buddhism

#### 1.1 Buddhist Sangha

The dissemination of Buddhism beyond India was initiated by Emperor Ashoka of the Maurya Dynasty, who ruled over almost all of the Indian subcontinent ca. 269–232 BC. Ashoka was the patron of the third Great Buddhist Council (GBC), which convened around 250 BC. As a devotee of Buddhism, the Emperor asked the Sangha to elect a number of monks who were well versed in the teachings of the Buddha, and who could recite the Dhamma and Vinaya by heart, to be appointed as a group of *dhammadūta* (lit., “messengers of the Dhamma”). These *dhammadūta* monks were sent to preach the Dhamma and establish the Sangha in nine different realms. It is said that two *dhammadūta* monks, the Venerable Soṇa and the Venerable Uttara, were sent to the area of present-day Myanmar (Burma). By facilitating this proselytization, Ashoka enabled Buddhism to expand its reach and flourish. Hazra (1982) and Swearer (1995) also note that Buddhism reached Southeast Asia shortly after the Buddha passed away.

As Buddhism spread to different regions, the number of new local monks in these areas increased. In addition, the structure and function the newly established Sangha was adapted to the local needs and circumstances of each particular locale. At first, the primary function of the Sanghawas to provide newly ordained monks with an ideal setting for the practice of the Buddha’s teachings, the Dhamma. Over time, the role of the Sangha became more and more concerned with social issues. This process culminated in the second Great Buddhist Council (443 BC), through which the Sangha was divided into two Buddhist Schools: orthodox and heterodox (Hazra 1982: 28).

Moreover, as detailed in Chapter 1, monks not only teach the Dhamma, but also perform ceremonies for the laity, especially in regard to important life events and rites of passage<sup>29</sup> such as birth, ordination, and death. Furthermore, the presence of monks at the opening ceremony of a new business was and still is considered auspicious. These functions of the Sangha continue to the present day. Indeed, in numerous Buddhist countries, for instance, monks are requested to bless new houses, cars, and even small vehicles such as motorbikes. In short, the roles played by monks in each society often reflect the people's needs. However, the two foremost duties of Buddhist monks remain the study of scriptures and meditation training for themselves.

Also, to reiterate, in the early days of Buddhism, the members of the Buddhist Sangha were all Arahanta Bhikkhu or enlightened monks. Later, the number of Bhikkhu who were still striving to reach enlightenment steadily increased. Nowadays, other types of Buddhist disciples – for example, novices (Pali: *sāmanera*, Lao: *chua/samanen*), white-robed postulants (Pali: *anāgarika*; Lao: *phò khao*), and nuns (Lao: *mae khao*) – are also considered members of the Buddhist Sangha. However, it seems that Lao people view monks and novices as being spiritually superior to female Sangha members, while the monks are, of course, still considered to be the most sacred (Nhoy 1959f: 250).

## 1.2 An Introduction of Buddhism to Laos

Before Buddhism was introduced into Lao society, Lao people believed in animism or *phi* (ผี) (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: 107) and Hinduism. Various types of magic also seem to have been used popularly. In order to understand how the Lao people became Buddhists, it is necessary to briefly examine the history of Buddhism in Laos. According to the Chronicles of Laos and Maha Sila (2001: 45–46), Buddhism was officially introduced to the Lao over two separate periods during the Lan Xang era. As noted in Chapter 1, Buddhism was first introduced into the Kingdom of Lan Xang via Müang Nakhòn Luang (modern Cambodia), because King Fa Ngum's Queen, Pha Nang Kaeo Keng Nya, who was of Khmer Buddhist origin, disapproved of the animistic rituals and ceremonies held throughout the kingdom, including at the royal palace. As a result, she entreated the king to send royal envoys to her motherland to request a delegation to propagate Buddhism in Lan Xang.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For more details see Swearer 1995a: 50–61; Thòngkham 2546 (2003): 116–168; Khamphun 2011: 13, 34–40, 217–228.

<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the delegation left no concrete evidence of the introduction of Buddhism to the indigenous peoples who were settled on their path to the south of the Lan Xang kingdom. This might indicate that they hurried to Müang Xiang Thòng, the capital of the kingdom, to fulfill the Queen's request or that

The second official introduction of Buddhism into Lan Xang was initiated by King Phothisalalat himself (1520–1550). Specifically, he sent envoys to Chiang Mai to ask for the *Tipiṭaka* to be given to his kingdom. The *Tipiṭaka* or Buddhist Canon was brought from Chiang Mai, at that time the capital of Lan Na kingdom (modern Chiang Mai of Thailand), to the Lan Xang kingdom. With regards to McDaniel’s work (2009: 128–129) “Two Buddhist librarians: The proximate mechanisms of Northern Thai Buddhist history”, the Buddhist Canon was written on a number of palm-leaf fascicles. Furthermore, in order to show that he was a devout Buddhist and to help Buddhism flourish throughout his kingdom, King Phothisalalat was ordained as a monk for three months or one Buddhist Lent. After leaving the monkhood, he resumed his position as king. He then issued a royal decree abolishing animism and ordered that all animistic altars (*hò phi*) be replaced with monasteries (Evans 2002: 9–10; Sila 2001: 63; Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: xxvi). These accounts indicate that the introduction of Buddhism into Lan Xang and the replacement of animism were deliberate outcomes intended by the rulers of Lan Xang. The main task of the monks at that time was to propagate Buddhism.

Nevertheless, even today various aspects of animist and Hindu beliefs and practices can still be observed throughout the everyday life of the Lao people. In other words, it has not been possible to fully abolish the indigenous beliefs of the Lao people. Indeed, these beliefs have instead become one of the variously-conspicuous parts of Lao culture. As a consequence, the Lao people have a complex belief system; in essence, it is a combination of Buddhism, Hinduism, and animism. Therefore, it is not surprising that some monks purport the ability to exercise supernatural powers.<sup>31</sup> It is believed that this has been the case since ancient times (Thongkham 2003: 190–200).

From the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, after King Suliyavongsa had passed away and Phaya Müang Chan had seized the throne, Vientiane was plunged into chaos. In consequence, the Kingdom of Lan Xang was divided between

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they might have thought that, after being introduced to the capital, Buddhism would be carried on and introduced into the various local *müangs* which were dependent on the kingdom. However, they did introduce Buddhism in Vientiane before coming to Müang Xiang Thòng. According to chronicles, the stop in Vientiane was necessary because the Luang Pha Bang Buddha image which they carried ‘miraculously’ became too heavy to bear any further.

<sup>31</sup> The most famous example of a monk believed to have possessed supernatural powers is probably the senior monk Pha Malai (ພະມາໄລ). According to legend, he once travelled to visit both Hell and Heaven. In the realm of the underworld, he asked hell beings (*sat nahok*) what caused them to suffer there. In the heavenly realms he met the divine being who would become the next Buddha. Returning to the world of human beings (*müang khon*), he told people about his visits to Hell and Heaven.

For more details about the Lao story of Pha Malai, see manuscripts nos. BAD-13-1-0024; BAD-13-1-0109; BAD-13-1-0110; BAD-13-1-0218.

Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Champasak (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: 142). Many sources such as Term (1997) and the chronicles of Laos indicate that Buddhism was introduced into the South of Laos following these events. The senior monk, Pha Khu Phonsamek, who was believed to have had supernatural powers played a major role in this. As the intellectual leader of his community, he persuaded over three thousand people to leave Vientiane and move southwards in order to seek a suitable location for a new settlement. Reaching the location of present-day Champasak – traditionally appearing in various sources under the term Müang Pasak, Basak or Champa Nakhòn – he was asked by Nang Phaeng, the ruler of Müang Champasak to become the regent of the *müang* (Maha Sila 2001: 127–128; Tomecko 2009: XV–XVI; Bounleuth 2004: 29–30). Thus, Buddhism was introduced to the indigenous people who settled in the southern part of Lan Xang (Grabowsky 2007: 135) – that is to say, the inhabitants of Müang Champasak and its dependency Müang.

Furthermore, manuscripts containing the chronicle of Champasak (16 05 07 14 001 00, 16 01 13 14 001 00) document numerous events which occurred on the journey of Pha Khu Phonsamek, abbot of Vat Phonsamek, and the abbot’s followers to Champasak. These include, for instance, that: a number of stupas and Buddhist monasteries were built; his close disciples were appointed chiefs (ຜູ້ເບິ່ງແຍງ/ຮັກສາ) of each of the main localities that they passed; and an important statue of the Buddha, called Pha Chao Ong Saen, was cast under Pha Khu Phonsamek’s leadership. Each part of this image of the Buddha image was casted at a different location and then assembled to create the complete statue. This process testifies to Pha Khu Phonsamek’s sculptural skills. Apart from these stories, Pha Khu Phonsamek forbade settlement at numerous locations because he claimed to have seen, through meditation, that there would be a disaster destroying the *müang* and/or serious quarrels would break out in the city, leading to bloody confrontations.<sup>32</sup> The spiritual ability on prediction of the future has been preserved from one generation to the next and was practised up to the twentieth century (BAD-12-2-1983.001), and it might be carried on consistently.

The stories above demonstrate that the introduction of Buddhism into the southern part of Laos was led by a senior monk. The introduction was not the work of the monk alone, but also of laypeople – especially the heads of local communities. Monks together with laypeople propagated Buddhism, so they recognized each other and lived in the same community peacefully. Some demands of the community – for instance, predictions of the

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<sup>32</sup> This is known in Lao as *khon thang puang chak bò thük tòng khòng kan chak kha fan kan* ຄົນທັງປວງຈັກບໍ່ຖືກຕ້ອງຄ່ອງກັນ ຈັກຂ້າຟັນກັນ, which means “the people of the city will not get along well [and] will slaughter each other” (DLLM: 1605071400100; 1601131400100).



future, the calculation of the auspicious monuments, and even the removal of bad luck – might not directly deal with the Buddhist teachings, but such demands, nevertheless, are addressed by the Sangha. It was, and still is, believed to be acceptable that monks perform these acts. Tips and Bertuccio (1998: 63–67) state that numerous monks possess knowledge pertaining to astrology and magic. This is not astonishing because most laypeople recognize that monks are pure in their virtues (ມີສິນບໍລິສຸດ). They strongly believe that a man with pure virtues can practise these tasks much more effectively than someone lacking virtue (ບໍ່ມີສິນ). Therefore, the laypeople indirectly became both the proponents and defenders of such monks, and of Buddhism as a whole, even though engaging with such matters is ostensibly forbidden to Buddhist monks of all statuses according to strict interpretations of the Vinaya. By obtaining firm support from such laypeople, however, monks who favour supernatural acts are happy to engage in such practices and do so repeatedly to respond to the demands of the laypeople.

## 2. Lao Buddhist Sangha<sup>33</sup>

### 2.1 Administration

The Lao Buddhist Sangha is known as the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization (LBFO). The three aims of the LBFO are (1) to preserve Buddhism in Laos according to the sect or *nikaya* (Pali: *nikāya*) of Lao Buddhism, of which there is only one,<sup>34</sup> (2) to observe the behaviour of monks and novices in order to ensure that they follow the Lord Buddha's teachings and the particular disciplines of each monastery, and (3) to compile inter alia a list of monks, novices, nuns, monastery boys, palm-leaf manuscripts, Buddha statues, and so forth. (R-LBFO07-08). These parameters indicate that numerous monks whose main tasks are very important to the administration of the Sangha must pay a lot of attention to the performance of their temporal duties as well as the cultivation of their mind.

Document no. BAD-12-2-1977.001 provides plenty of important information on the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang in the 1970s. In early 1977, Sathu Nyai Khamchan, the President of the LBFO of Luang Prabang province, was invited to preside over the festivals for celebrations of monks' assembly halls in four villages located in the northern part of

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<sup>33</sup> Some parts of this section were developed from a working paper written for DORISEA, No. 9, 2014, ISSN: 2196-6893.

<sup>34</sup> Lao Buddhism, unlike Thai Buddhism, has no sect – it is known to the Lao as 'the sect of Lao Buddhism'. However, Lao Buddhism is heavily influenced by traditional animistic and shamanistic beliefs. This feature can also be found in the forms of Buddhism practised in the countries neighbouring Laos.

Luang Prabang town. This might be taken as evidence that monks of the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang regularly participated in such religious festivities. Furthermore, the Buddhist laypeople who had settled in those villages were still devout. They were happy to contribute to the construction of monastic buildings like temple halls in order to make sure that Buddhism continued to flourish in their villages.

One important issue related to the administration of the Sangha is the census of monastic members. Monks, novices, nuns, and monastery boys have to be re-listed every year.<sup>35</sup> These lists provide us with data concerning the number of members of each monastic order and its composition. The data catalogued include, for instance, their names, surnames and age, the number of years since their ordination, their educational, social and ethnic backgrounds, the number of their obligations, and so forth. Furthermore, all members of the LBFO were required to live according to the Buddhist rules of the Vinaya as well as the additional rules of their own monastery (BAD-12-2-1981.006). In order to strengthen the Sangha, the committees of the LBFO at all levels must be elected by the monks (BAD-12-2-1982.002). It is also necessary for the LBFO to meet regularly, preside over all matters which concern the Sangha, and to solve any problems that arise (BAD-12-2-1987.010). Whenever people, both from Laos and abroad, face serious problems in their lives, especially when caused by natural disasters, the LBFO assists them with generous donations. The LBFO organizations of Luang Prabang can be considered representative of LBFO organizations throughout all of Laos because the members of the organizations of all levels (village, district and province) in the province pay attention to the lives of all laypeople, not only to lay Buddhists<sup>36</sup> (BAD-12-2-1986.003).

## 2.2 Education

Traditionally, newly-ordained monks and novices must learn at least two skills: how to preach and how to chant. These are known to Lao Buddhists as *hian thet* and *hian sut* (ຮຽນ ເທດ; ຮຽນສູດ). This requirement appeared in the 2007-2008 Report of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization (LBFO) as follows: “the LBFO committees of all levels have to

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<sup>35</sup> For more details see documents nos. BAD-12-2-1984.006, BAD-12-2-1984.009, BAD-12-2-1984.011, and BAD-12-2-1988.005.

<sup>36</sup> Recently (08.07.2015), the delegation of the LBFO, headed by Pha Achan Dr Bunma Simmaphon, Vice President of the LBFO provided over K 374 million (€41.867,23), in the name of Lao Buddhists, to the Director of Department of Foreign Relations in order to aid the Nepalese people following the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015. This money was donated by the Lao Buddhists [probably including monks, novices, and nuns] throughout the country. (<http://www.vientianemai.net/teen/khao/1/14443>, visited on August 05, 2015)

devote themselves as prominent administrators and educators to serve the education of the Sangha. They have to ensure that the monks and novices under their supervision learn to preach and chant” (R-LBFO07-08). In addition, monks and novices of all ages, including newly-ordained ones, must be able to read palm-leaf manuscripts and to give laypeople blessings. In short, reading the Tham-Lao (various variants of the Dhamma) script and chanting are basic abilities required of both monks and novices. Monks and novices who cannot accomplish these basic tasks will not be respected as esteemed members of the Sangha.

Today, the Buddhist community, and the Lao society in general, place more demands on the Sangha than in the past. Monks and novices are no longer required to be just experts in Buddhist teachings and to practice good conduct, but they are also asked to study numerous secular subjects in an authoritative manner. The study of both secular and religious matters, however, is in fact, nothing new as a number of subjects which are not included in the curriculum of Buddhist teachings – such as architecture, medicine, and magic, among others – have been investigated by monks and novices since ancient times. In other words, both monastic members and laypeople are required to have certain knowledge related to both religious and non-religious subjects. As Somlith (Somlith 1955: 108) notes: “Towards 1940, however, the teaching of certain Buddhist doctrines and precepts was introduced into the lay schools in the principal towns. Conversely, rudiments of French and arithmetic were introduced in the religious schools.” This is strongly supported by the [Board of] Buddhist Advisors’ discussion – held in Vientiane in 1961 – which concluded that the curriculum of the Sangha schools had to improve and become similar to that of the secular system (BAD-12-2-1961.035). Following this, in May 1968, at the height of the war in Laos,<sup>37</sup> a conference of the Lao Sangha of the northern region convened at the monastery of Si Phutthabat Luang Prabang, where numerous papers were presented in relation to various secular topics (BAD-01-0014).<sup>38</sup> This was a response to the

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<sup>37</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997: 136) notes on the war in Laos that, “for a decade from 1964 to 1973 Laos was subjected to the most savage warfare in the nation’s history. Throughout this period, the vital tasks of economic development and construction of a modern nation state were overshadowed by the division and destruction of war.”

<sup>38</sup> According to Pha Maha Sukan Thammarangsi’s paper “the benefits of religious education” (Lao: ປະໂຫຍດຂອງການສຶກສາທາງທຳ), nine subjects were taught at the *sangha* primary school. The subjects were: 1) theology and morality, 2) sanitation, 3) Lao language, 4) arithmetic, 5) history, 6) geography, 7) science, 8) French, and 9) Pali. The curriculum of the *sangha* secondary school comprised 1) theology, 2) Lao language, 3) Pali, 4) French, 5) English, 6) technology, 7) geography and history, and 8) pedagogy. Pha Maha Sukan only presented the names of the subjects taught at the *sangha* school, and did not detail the number learning and teaching hours required of each subject. However, his paper tells us that a number of secular subjects were taught at the *sangha* schools at both primary and secondary

fact that monks and novices were increasingly required – by social demands – to gain additional knowledge in secular subjects. Thus, two Sangha colleges and a number of Sangha schools were founded, all run by the LBFO. Monks and novices who complete their studies at Sangha colleges or Sangha teacher training schools are sent to work and serve the cause of Buddhism throughout the country (BAD-12-2-1985.02).

It appears, moreover, that, in some respects, the Lao Buddhist Sangha pays much more attention to teaching the basics of pedagogy than their secular counterparts. All final-year-students of the Sangha higher secondary schools, for instance, must complete at least one course about approaches to pedagogy. This better enables them to conduct educational work and serve as propagators of Buddhism. It is also necessary for students to either complete a meditation training course or study meditation subjects for at least one week (R-LBFO07-08). These mandatory courses on pedagogy may also explain why numerous former monks and novices who graduated from higher secondary schools and teacher training schools are generally considered to be qualified to become teachers. Indeed, Ladwig (2011: 199–200) details that in the 1950s and 1960s, novices and children in the Vientiane area were often taught together in the temple by a monk working as a teacher. Somlith (1955: 109) similarly notes that:

In both types of school, religious and lay, the Lao language is taught. Furthermore, the pagoda school does not refuse lay pupils, nor is the state school closed to the young monks. But the curriculum of the religious system comprises, in its earlier stages, a much deeper study of Buddhist doctrines and T[h]am script.

Somlith further elucidates that the main responsibility of the senior monks was teaching. Former monks could also be called up as teachers, regardless of whether or not they possessed special qualifications in regard to that particular subject. However, one may argue that numerous former monks were not called up as teachers at that time and that they made their living according to their own wants and wishes. In the towns, for instance, they often worked as staff members for both the state and in the private sector. At a village level, their way of life was similar to that of other villagers, but they were recognized as scholars amongst their community as well. At present, it is also not unusual for monks and novices to run their own private courses or teach various subjects at monasteries.

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school levels. This account strongly indicates that the Lao *sangha* school has officially developed its curriculum in a manner similar to that of the secular schools since at least the 1960s.

In 1984, Sathu Nyai Khamchan, who also held the position of Head of the Sangha Educational Board of Luang Prabang, organized a professional training course for teachers of the Sangha primary schools in the province (BAD-12-2-1984.009). During this twenty-two-day training period, the trainees improved their knowledge of the following four subjects: Vinaya, Dhamma, school management, and the writing of official documents (BAD-12-2-1984.005). From this list of subjects we can conclude that the trainees were required to thoroughly know and understand the meaning and contents of the subjects that they would teach. Otherwise, they would not be able to pass on the teachings of Buddhism to their students. This might also indicate that the LBFO committee of Luang Prabang was more concerned about the teachers' understanding of Buddhist teachings than their pedagogical abilities. Furthermore, it may demonstrate that the traditional way of teaching, used and transmitted over many generations, is still sufficient for contemporary monastic education, which, nevertheless includes numerous secular subjects.<sup>39</sup> However, other subjects related to specific teaching skills – such as the composition of educational documents, making use of a variety of teaching aids, and knowing how to further develop the students' skills and evaluate their knowledge – were also among the subjects taught during the training period. In fact, the course was supported by a secular government organization. The head of the provincial education division of Luang Prabang gave his support to the training thus enabling Sathu Nyai Khamchan to receive funds from the government (BAD-12-2-1984.009).

Another outstanding senior monk who has dealt with the dissemination of Buddhism and the Sangha education in Luang Prabang, and thus should be respectfully presented here, is Sathu Nyai One Keo Sitthivong. He is currently the President of the LBFO committee of Luang Prabang province and has built and developed the forest monastery of Pha O, located in Ban Pha O. The monastery is open to the ordination of young boys from all ethnic groups whose residences are far away from the town and who have difficulties gaining access to higher education because of economic status of families are inadequate for their study. A number of monks, and a much larger number of novices attending primary or secondary education, reside there. Presently, there are two one-storey school buildings at a corner of this monastery that are used as teaching and learning spaces for lower secondary education for the Sangha of Luang Prabang, and another two-storey school building is under construction. This school might become a centre for higher education or maybe the Sangha College for the northern part of Laos sometime in the near future.

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<sup>39</sup> For more details about monastic education in Laos today, especially higher education, see McDaniel 2009, pp. 64–68.

### 2.3 Dhamma dissemination

Discussing the dissemination of the Dhamma and morality codes in Laos means talking about the preaching, which takes place during various types of festivals and special ceremonies. Many laypeople, especially those who are devout but lack a deeper understanding of Buddhism, think that they can gain merit (ໄດ້ບຸນ) just by listening to sermons. Consequently, they do not pay much attention to the contents of the sermon but rather enjoy the pleasant sound and the personalities of the preachers. This can clearly be seen during the Vessantara Festival<sup>40</sup> (*bun phatvet* ບຸນພະເຫວດ). Not only is the perfection of the charity of the Bodhisatta (Pali: *bodhisatta* ພະໂພທິສັດ) honoured during the celebration of the Vessantara Festival, the festival is also famous for the cheerful performances of laypeople.

A very popular traditional way to propagate Buddhism is the compilation and copying of Buddhist texts. Among the members of the Buddhist community, this work is known under the term *sang nangsū* (ສ້າງໜັງສື) (Grabowsky and Apiradee 2013: 32), which refers to the compilation, copying, or donation of a written work, generally transmitted in manuscript-form (Hundius 1990: 31). The compiler, scribe, or donor is often a monk or a novice, but in most case it is a devout layperson. Most manuscripts sponsored by laypeople are donated to the Sangha. By compiling or copying religious texts, there is direct

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<sup>40</sup> According to legend, a long time ago Pha Malai traveled to Heaven and talked to the Bodhisatta who will come down to be born as the next Lord Buddha. The Bodhisatta told him that the one act that should be done by a human being who wishes to be born within his age was to complete listening to the story of Vessantara in one day (BAD-13-1-0109/0110). Thus, devout Buddhists follow this story and celebrate the Vessantara Festival up to the present day. This festival is recognized as one of the main Buddhist festivals in Laos. Usually it is held between the fourth and the sixth lunar month and lasts three days. On the last day, the story of Vessantara is preached. This story is very long and takes many hours to tell. As such, it is divided into many parts and recited by different monks and novices according to their experience.

The following is a brief synopsis of the story. Vessantara was the crown prince of King Sonsai and Queen Phutsadi. Ever since he was young, he had loved to give alms. He married princess Mathi, and they had two children, Kanha and Jali. One day, prince Vessantara donated an auspicious elephant to the eight Brahmins of another *müang*, and this action angered the people of his own *müang*. The people asked King Sonsai to punish prince Vessantara by exiling him from the city. As a result, Vessantara, Mathi and their children, travelled to mountain of Vongkot where they became hermits.

During this period, Vessantara donated both Mathi and their children to Brahmins but Mathi was returned to him and their children were taken to the Kingdom of Sonsai. The king redeemed his grandchildren and gave the Brahmin a big ransom. Then, he ordered his high-ranking officials and people to go in a procession to invite Vessantara to return to the city. Later on, Prince Vessantara succeeded his father, and the people of his *müang* were happy because he ruled the *müang* by following the Ten Duties of a King (Pali: *dasa-rājadhamma*).

For more details about Pha Malai and Vessantara Jataka and Prince Vessantara festival, see Brereton 2010: 25–44, and McClung 1975.

continuity within the Buddhist teachings that have been preserved and disseminated. In the case of the Lao Buddhism of Luang Prabang, Sathu Nyai Khamchan was one of the monks involved in this work. Not only did he himself compile and copy religious writings, but he was often asked to be the keeper of manuscripts.

#### **2.4 Construction of monastic buildings**

It is very interesting to examine the qualifications that the lay community demands from a monk. Some laypeople pay less attention to the monks' religious qualifications, but are, rather, more interested in the construction of the local monasteries. This tendency is stronger in remote villages than in cities and reflected in the Lao proverb “ບວດບໍ່ສ້າງບໍ່ສາກໍແໜງວ່າບໍ່ບວດ!”, which means “You should not ordain and live in the monkhood if you do not build/develop your own monastery!” This suggests that a monk who is not very good at teaching the Dhamma, but knows how to lead laypeople in erecting their own monastery, will be honoured and respected as well.

In the Lao tradition, a monastery comprises at least three main buildings: an abode or several abodes (ກູຕິ/ກະຕິ/ກູດ), an ordinance hall, and a sermon hall (ສາລາໂຮງທໍາ/ທໍແຈກ) (Somlith 1955: 79). Traditionally, the construction of monastic buildings is undertaken via the cooperation of a monastery and its supporting village. This is challenging work for the community because it requires firm solidarity and sufficient funds. Sometimes, the work is stopped for a period of time due to financial problems. The fact that some necessary building materials might not be available on the local market further complicates the construction of monastic buildings. In 1985, a number of roof tiles for a monastic building in Luang Prabang, ordered from Vientiane, were transported by boat over a distance of 430 km (BAD-12-2-1985.007). This shows some of the difficulties of the construction, which posed by transportation back in those days.

Just like the construction of new buildings, the restoration of monastic buildings is also the direct responsibility of the Sangha. In fact, monks and novices learn craftsmanship from one another, and pass their skills on from one generation to the next. “Learning by doing” is one of the methodologies they pride themselves on. Consequently, they are able to repair their monastic buildings themselves. Up to the present day, monks and novices in Luang Prabang town and in all of Laos take part in both the construction and the renovation of monastic buildings.

Apart from the above mentioned issues, numerous monks and novices complete their training by learning with their teachers. However, two methods of teaching should be mentioned here: communal and private teaching. Communal teaching is used to educate many disciples at the same time, whereas private teaching is used to educate a single

adherent. According to the tradition, the teacher would decide which one of his disciples should learn a certain subject.<sup>41</sup> Monks and novices in Luang Prabang and in Laos as a whole have their own experiences learning with and acquiring knowledge from their teacher. Sathu Nyai Khamfan Silasangvara, former honorary president of the LBFO and former abbot of Vat Suvanna Khili (Vat Khili) of Luang Prabang, should be mentioned in this context as a monk with various artistic skills. He studied model-making, sculpturing and painting for six years. As an abbot, he led monks and novices under his responsibility to complete the restoration work of the temple hall and other buildings at Vat Khili. Furthermore, Buddha images cast by him can be admired in a number of monasteries in Luang Prabang town (BAD-12-2-1987.002).

## 2.5 Religious life: Vipassanā

Importantly, the main tasks which the members of the Buddhist Sangha have always carried out are the study of the Buddhist scriptures and the practice of meditation. The members of the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang town, especially the senior monks, take these tasks very seriously. However, the daily life of a monastery usually does not support the practice of meditation for many reasons such as: the monastery is located in a village, which is crowded and full of visitors; monastic buildings are under construction or repair; or any other number of distracting factors.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, many monks and novices who live in a large monastery do not gain much in the way of results from their meditation. Nevertheless, they do know the correct way to practise it from their study of the scriptures.

One of the best ways to learn meditation is to seek out a person who has experience in this matter. Indeed, Mettananda (1999: 25) notes:

Then he should search for his dear good friend (*kalyāṇamitta*), who he should venerate with respectful words and should render him all services, [...] He should also ask for meditation instructions until he understands the practice thoroughly. Then he should choose a specific meditation

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<sup>41</sup> This lesson is also reflected in some Lao proverbs such as *hian nam phò kò nam khu* ຮຽນນຳພໍ່ກໍ່ນຳຄູ, which translates to: “learn with the father, build with the teacher” and *mok pa daek mi khu chi pu mi vat* ໝົກປາແດກມີຄູ ຈີ່ປູມີວາດ, which means: “wrapping pickled fish needs a teacher, roasting a crab needs a way”.

<sup>42</sup> For more details see Buddhaghosa 1929, *The Path of Purity / A translation of Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga* by Pe Muang Tin. Part II: Of Concentration, Pali Text Society, London: The Oxford University Press, pp. 138–143.



technique that suits his own temperament (*carita*), before he proceeds to find a proper place for his own seclusion.

This strongly indicates that practising meditation requires proper guidance. For a person who wants to practice concentration, it is useful to consult Vajirañāna's work (1962: 57):

In the very beginning therefore it is essential to focus the attention upon an object (*ārammaṇa*) entirely dissociated from the passions, in order to draw a pure mental picture. This picture the meditator retains as his ideal, and trains his mind to concentrate upon it. The mind becomes pure or impure, not through its own nature, but through the arising of pure or impure thoughts.

Whenever the conditions for staying in a quiet place are satisfactory, especially in the dry season, the time and place for meditation practice are scheduled. Monks and novices then have the opportunity to apply the theory that they have learnt at their monastery in actual meditation training. This usually takes place once a year, and is known in Lao by the term *khao vipatsana* (ເຂົ້າວິປັດສະນາ) or *khao thudong* (ເຂົ້າທູດົງ). The monks and novices leave their monasteries and stay at a forest monastery or in the jungle, where they usually stay for about one month. During this time, they concentrate on meditation in order to gain spiritual insights. Meditation practices can also be studied from palm-leaf manuscripts of containing the Thutangkhavat text (ທູຕັງຄະວັດ) (Pali: *dhutaṅgavatta*). As Sathu Nyai Khamchan stored some palm-leaf manuscripts of Thutangkhavat in his abode it can be surmised that he himself actively practised meditation.

## **2.6 Monks and Health Services**

Traditionally, a number of Lao Buddhist Sangha members are very skilled in the use of various types of Lao traditional medicine. In ancient times, people with severely ill relatives turned to monks for help as monks were the medical experts of the time and performed all kinds of treatments. Buddhist monks – including the Lord Buddha himself – have been experienced in healing since the time of the Lord Buddha. According to Birnbaum (1997: 1), the Buddhist texts present three aspects of healing: (1) the cure of disease through healing agents (herbs and foods), surgery, and other physical means; (2) spiritual causes and cures of diseases; and (3) the healing process as a metaphor for spiritual growth, with the Buddha named as Supreme Physician and Buddhist teachings termed the King of Medicines.

Many supernatural beliefs are part and parcel of Lao traditional medicine. These beliefs partially explain the highly revered status of monks in matters of medicine. One example is the common belief in the healing powers of loving kindness, or Metta (Pali: *mettā*). Morality (Pali: *sīla*) and concentration (Pali: *samādhi*) are prerequisites for the development of Metta. Furthermore, the purer the mind, the easier it is to develop Metta. Monks who follow strict moral rules, laid down in the Vinaya, and consistently purify their mind by developing concentration, are therefore believed to have much more Metta than ordinary people. It is believed that Metta can be projected to other beings. This helps in the healing of various diseases – especially psychosomatic sicknesses – and strengthens the body in general. In brief, monks treat their patients with both medicines and Metta (BAD-13-2-048). The Lao word *mettatham* (ເມດຕາທຳ) was selected as the name for a project launched in late 2001: the Mettatham Project, supported by UNICEF. This project aims at training Lao monks, novices and nuns in the use of herbal medicines for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. For this project, a variety of plants used to produce medicinal substances or herbal medicines have been planted on monastic grounds (R-LBFO07-08).

Many monks who are believed to be experts in traditional treatment do not have any medicine in stock. As a result, whenever a sick person or their relatives ask them for medicine, the monks provide them with fresh medicinal substances. It is believed that each plant has specific parts – for instance, root (*hak* ຮາກ), bark (*püak* ເຍືອກ), leaf (*bai* ໃບ), flower (*dòk* ດອກ), fruit (*mak* ພາກ), and seed (*met* ເມັດ), among others – that can be used for the creation of medicinal substances. These substances are believed to have no effect unless the plants have been picked at an auspicious moment. In other words, the time and means for picking the substances considerably influence their effect. Tomecko (2009: 21) explains that:

Great care goes into selection of the ingredients and the recipes are frequently kept secret. ... Harvesting must also be timed precisely. For example, the moon is said to have an effect on the medicinal potency of plants and the quality of their essential oils, so certain phases of the moon are selected for harvesting.

Some monks are unable to remember all the details of plants and substances used for medical purposes. In response to this, a number of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts dealing with the medical use of different herbs, plants and substances have been written and are kept in monastic manuscript collections. Some were found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode. This may indicate that Sathu Nyai Khamchan was interested in traditional medicine. At the very least, it provides circumstantial evidence for the

engagement of the Lao Buddhist Sangha in the provision of health services. In fact, a number of Lao monks and nuns – especially those who regularly reside in forest monasteries – have been called *mò ya* (ໝໍຍາ) or medicinal doctors. In her work, *Buddhist healing in Laos: plants of the fragrant forest*, Tomecko (2009: 11) states that, “Forest monasteries frequently have a resident monk doctor who is responsible for the preparation of pills and other traditional medications. He might also include psychological counselling or the use of sacred Buddhist chants to heal the sick.”

Importantly, a common local belief holds that a practitioner of traditional medicine cannot apply his knowledge unless he has performed the ceremony of paying respect to his teacher known as *tang khai hian ao* (ຕັ້ງຄາຍຮຽນເອົາ). Objects or offerings for worship are used in this ceremony depending on the type of medicine needed for application. In other words, a lay person may know many types of medicinal herbs from books or other sources, but without the proper performance of *tang khai hian ao*, all of the medicine provided by this person would have no effect. Psychologically, a practitioner providing medicine without worship offerings would not be accepted by the patient. It is customary that the sick person provides the practitioner with some objects used for the ceremony of paying respect to the practitioner’s teacher (ບູຊາຄູ່), in essence, at least one pair of flowers and candles (ດອກໄມ້ທຽນຄູ່). If not, the medicine they take might not prove to be as powerful as expected and, therefore, the state of his or her health may not improve.

## 2.7 Monks and indigenous beliefs

In Laos, Buddhism has existed side-by-side with pre-Buddhist animism and Brahmanic practices. Most Lao people of all ethnic groups, whether or not they claim to be Buddhists, believe in a rich supernatural world. When encountering serious problems in their lives, they may ask for the aid of a spiritual practitioner who is believed to be able to protect them from many kinds of harm. Some senior monks, being respected because of their seniority and devotion to the Buddhist teachings, are believed to possess supernatural powers. Thus, it is not unusual that monks with good behaviour and knowledge of Buddhist teachings are believed to have the spiritual power to eliminate all kinds of evil.

Important non-Buddhist practices which are deemed appropriate for monks to perform include: magic (ຄາຖາອາຄົມ), the removal of misfortune (ການເສຍເຄາະສະເດາະນາມ), the calculation of auspicious moments (ການໄລ່ລືກໄລ່ຍາມ), and predictions (ການທໍານາຍ). A number of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode are relevant to these aspects (see Chapter 4). In fact, these manuscripts were kept in the same cabinets as other palm-leaf manuscripts, including manuscripts which are incontrovertibly of a religious nature. That non-religious manuscripts were kept in the same place as

religious ones demonstrate that they were all regarded highly by Sathu Nyai Khamchan. It also shows that Sathu Nyai Khamchan paid close attention to all of the manuscripts for which he was responsible. The importance of these manuscripts may be heightened if they have been kept there since the time of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. This is because he may have regularly used them and read through the rest sometimes in order to remain familiar with the contents of each. Nevertheless, these manuscripts, whether or not they were all used by him, should be recognized as beneficial sources for further study.

### **3. Lao manuscript culture<sup>43</sup>**

Monasteries are traditionally thought of as centres for producing, storing, and caring for manuscripts made of various materials and written in different scripts. Manuscripts have been written and sponsored by both monastic members and laypeople. Monks and novices, probably including former monks and novices, initiate manuscript making because of writing acumen, whereas laypeople play the role of sponsors. Despite the fact that writers and scribes are Buddhists, Lao manuscripts contain not only religious texts, but also non-religious or secular texts.

#### **3.1 Writing materials**

##### a) Palm leaves

Traditionally, most monasteries in Laos have enough space in their vicinity for forestry and horticulture. In particular, fruit trees and various plants used for medicinal purposes are often planted nearby (R-LBFO07-08: 14). In addition, numerous monasteries place a great emphasis on the cultivation of palm trees (talipot palm, *Corypha umbraculifera*), because they provide the Lao monks with material for scribing/copying manuscripts.

In order to make palm leaves fit for writing, the leaves need to be processed in a special manner (Agrawal 1984: 27). In practice, several steps are necessary before palm leaves can be used as material for inscribing and copying. The three main steps are: first, the palm leaves are cut from the tree and pruned of their twigs; second, all of the leaves are boiled and dried to make them soft and durable; and, finally, third, they are cut in shapes and sizes according to purpose. Such leaves are made in two sizes, long palm leaves (*lan*

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<sup>43</sup> Some parts of this section were developed from a working paper written for DORISEA, No. 14, 2014, ISSN: 2196-6893. The word “manuscript” generally refers to old documents actually written by hand before books were made. It originated from the Latin *manu scriptus* (written by hand). In this study, manuscript also refers to a compiler’s unpublished works whether they are handwritten or typed. In addition, non-professionally printed works are included as well.

*nyao* ລານຍາວ) and short ones (*lan kòm* ລານກ້ອມ). These two types are used for different purposes and greatly differ in their features (see table 2.1 below). Numerous long and short palm leaves which are inscribed in their entirety are thread together, thereby forming a fascicle (ຜູກ). The number of leaves of any fascicle depends on the length and/or a number of its texts. All fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts are fastened by a string (*sai sanòng* ສາຍສະໜອງ). If the string of any fascicle is broken its leaves will separate from each other and become a loose palm-leaf manuscript which is known to Lao scholars by the term *nangsü taek phuk* (ໜັງສືແຕກຜູກ).

From Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection of manuscripts, a short text was written on some leaves bound by a cord and called *phuk* – the text is completed in one fascicle of palm-leaf manuscript. However, some long stories and texts, for instance, the story of Prince Vessantara and the text of Thutangkhavat (the thirteen ascetic practices) were not written as a single fascicle of palm leaves. The former was written on sixteen fascicles of long palm leaves (BAD-13-1-0114), but the fascicle numbers of the latter are fixable depending on the size of the leaves. If the long leaves were used for writing, the manuscript comprised two fascicles, whereas the fascicle numbers of the short leaves, containing the same text, increased to six fascicles (BAD-13-1-0058).

Generally speaking, numerous fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts – containing the same version of a literary text – are fastened together and called a *sum* (ຊຸມ), a bundle of many fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts to which two wooden boards are frequently added for protection. The bundle was then usually enclosed within a piece of cloth and tied with a string. A wrapped bundle of manuscripts is called a *mat* (ມັດ) (bunch; bundle). However, not only does a *mat* comprise a single bundle and one text, but it sometimes consists of many bundles with many fascicles and many texts as well.

Most palm-leaf manuscripts are inscribed with a stylus and these incisions are made visible by darkening them with black paint. Traditionally, the black paint for making the incisions on palm leaves visible is the wood oil of dipterocarpus which is known to Lao people by the term *nam man nyang* (ນ້ຳມັນຍາງ). It is necessary to follow a special process when making inscriptions on palm leaves. This process is described by Agrawal (1982: 85) as follows:

With the help of [an] iron stylus the writing and the illustrations were incised into the leaf. At this stage, however, the writing was not legible. A black paint prepared by mixing lamp-black or charcoal powder in oil was applied on the surface of the palm-leaf. The excess paint was wiped off with cloth. By this process the black paint was deposited in the incisions and remains there. In this manner the writing becomes visible.

Nonetheless, a few palm-leaf manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were produced by using a ballpoint pen or other modern tools (see Chapter 5.) Ballpoint pens can easily be used to write on many surfaces but the surface of palm leaves is naturally hard does not absorb liquids easily. Indeed, palm leaves are much less absorbent than paper (Agrawal 1982: 85). When written on the surface of the palm leaves, the ink of such pens can easily fade away and be washed out. However, there are many pen colours and these are easily accessible so this may convince the scribe to use them when making some manuscripts, especially in cases where the text is quite short. This is because any short text written with a ballpoint pen and that has lost its legibility can be quickly recopied and completed.

Table 2.1: Some Features of Palm-Leaf Manuscripts

Long palm-leaf	Short palm-leaf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size: about 50-60 x 4-5.5 cm.</li> <li>- Two holes for a string (<i>sai sanòng</i>), but generally only the left one is used.</li> <li>- Line: 4-6 lines; only the top-line and the bottom-line are written in full length.</li> <li>- Scripts: Tham-Lao (Dhamma), Lao Buhan (old Lao), Tham Lü, and Khòm.</li> <li>- Content: mostly religious texts.</li> <li>- Additional texts (paratexts): introductory text and colophon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size: about 30-40 x 4-5 cm.</li> <li>- One hole for a string (<i>sai sanòng</i>).</li> <li>- Line: 4-5 lines; only the top-line and the bottom-line are written in full length.</li> <li>- Scripts: Tham-Lao (Dhamma), Lao Buhan (old Lao).</li> <li>- Content: mostly non-religious texts.<sup>44</sup></li> <li>- Additional texts (paratexts): introductory text and colophon.</li> </ul>

## b) Paper

Paper is more convenient for inscribing and copying manuscripts than palm-leaf, as it can be shaped, sized and coloured according to the user's requirements. Agrawal (1984: 127) notes that, "Furthermore, manuscripts on paper could be bound in the modern book form, which was not possible for palm-leaf manuscripts." There is no concrete evidence

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<sup>44</sup> Traditionally, short palm leaves are used for scribing/copying non-religious texts, i.e., traditional medicine, astrology, magic, fortune-telling, etc. Apart from these, a number of Buddhist texts have also been written on short palm leaves. Any text could be written on this kind of palm leaves, which are known to the Lao as ຫນັງສືກ້ອມຕ່າງຄົນຕ່າງມື. This means, "short palm leaves manuscripts contained various texts according to the demands of their owners or users.

recording the exact date that paper was introduced into Lao society, especially with regard to modern paper. In Laos, palm leaves might be used for writing before paper (Finot 1959: 326; Phouvong 1959: 336). This suggests that people in Laos knew how to prepare palm leave for writing before they knew how to make paper from trees, especially mulberry tree. However, there are three types of paper that have been used to make manuscripts: mulberry paper (*chia sa* ເຈ້ຍສາ), *khòì*<sup>45</sup> paper (*chia khòì* ເຈ້ຍຂ່ອຍ), and modern industrially-produced paper (*chia samai mai* ເຈ້ຍສະໄໝໃໝ່). The folded books made of mulberry paper are known in Lao as *phap sa* (ພັບສາ); those made of *khòì* paper are denoted by the term *samut khòì* (ສະໝຸດຂ່ອຍ); and those made of modern paper are called *phap lan* (ພັບຫຼັ່ນ). The first two types are made from handmade products, whereas the latter is made of industrial materials. Nevertheless, Sathu Nyai Khamchan used the word *phap lan* to refer to all of them (BAD-13-2-066).

All of the papers discussed above were donated or sold by the owners, after which they were then altered to meet the requirements of the scribes (see Table 2 below). Seemingly, one edge of numerous sheets of mulberry and *khòì* papers of the same shape and size were glued and folded back and forth – making a leporello format. One edge of the selected sheets of the mulberry paper was then attached to each other by a string, thereby making its shape similar to a modern book. However, the back of any modern book is at the left side but the back of the mulberry-paper folded book is at the top the folded book. Unlike mulberry and *khòì* papers, various types of modern paper can be used for writing without alteration; that is, it is not necessary to cut it individually into various shapes and sizes.

Most paper manuscripts are written in black ink, but some are nonetheless written in ink of different colours. Furthermore, some manuscripts made in the format of *khòì* folded books are black in colour, so the text is usually written with white chalk but sometimes, also, in golden or yellow ink. Seemingly, the choice of the ink colour depends on the content of the text and the writer's experience.

As a mulberry-paper manuscript is made of numerous sheets of mulberry paper attached to each other by gluing them to form a folded book (Lao: ພັບ/ຫຼັ່ນ), over a long period of use, the glue may lose its quality and the sheets of such a manuscript might separate from each other. Furthermore, this paper can easily absorb various types of liquid substances, which can also make the binding of the pages unravel. Unfastened sheets are

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<sup>45</sup> *Khòì* is a common name of types of tree whose bark is used for the making of paper. There are two types of *khòì* tree in Laos, a common and thorn ones. Its botanical name is *Streblus asper*. *Chia sa* and *chia khòì* are the names of two types of paper which were made of the barks of *sa* and *khòì* trees. For more details on producing of *khòì* paper, see No Na Pak Nam and Sangaroon 1985: 6–13.

known in Lao as *bai lut* or *bai khat* (ໃບຫຸດ/ໃບຂາດ), that is to say, loose paper sheets. The fragments of these sheets are considered *suan lüa* or *suan khong lüa khòng bai* (ສ່ວນເຫຼືອ/ສ່ວນຄົງເຫຼືອຂອງໃບ).

Table 2.2: Characteristics of mulberry, *khòì* and modern paper manuscripts

Mulberry paper	<i>khòì</i> paper	Modern paper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size: various sizes/shapes. Folded book format: about 35 – 60 x 40 – 45 cm. Leporello format: about 10 – 15 x 35 – 50 cm.</li> <li>- Number of lines per page: depending on the size of the manuscript (<i>phap</i>). Folded book format: about 15 – 45 lines. Leporello format: about 4 – 10 lines.</li> <li>- Scripts: Tham-Lü, Tham-Lao (Dhamma), and Lao Buhan (old Lao).</li> <li>- Content: mostly non-religious texts.</li> <li>- Additional texts: (rarely) introductory text and colophon(s).</li> <li>- Table: (rarely) depends on the substance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size: about 30 – 40 x 10 – 15 cm.</li> <li>- Number of lines per page: about 4 – 10 lines.</li> <li>- Scripts: Tham-Lü, Tham-Lao (Dhamma), and Lao Buhan (old Lao).</li> <li>- Content: mostly non-religious texts.</li> <li>- Additional texts: (rarely) introductory text and colophon(s).</li> <li>- Image and text (do/do not go together).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size: two sizes/shapes, in essence, similar/close to that of <i>khòì</i> paper: about 40 x 15 cm; and of palm leaf: about 4,5 – 5,5 x 40 – 45 cm.</li> <li>- Number of lines per page: about 4 – 8 lines.</li> <li>- Scripts: Tham-Lao (Dhamma).</li> <li>- Content: mostly religious texts.</li> <li>- Additional texts: introductory text and colophon(s).</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Scripts, languages and tools

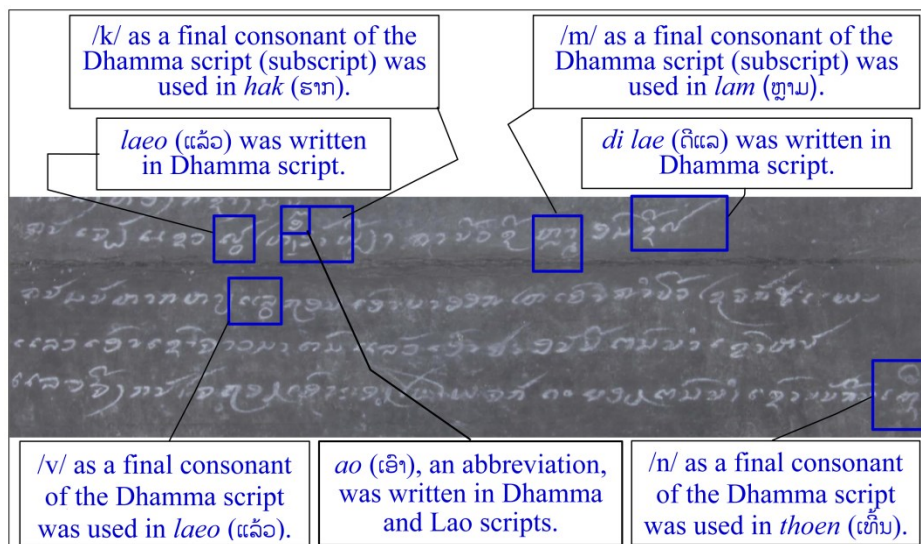
As Table 2.1 and 2.2 show, two types of scripts – Dhamma and Lao Buhan or ancient Lao scripts – are used for writing manuscripts, both on palm-leaf and paper. There are numerous variants of the Dhamma script such as Tham-Lao (Lao Dhamma script), Tham-Lan Na (Lan Na Dhamma script or Tua Müang), and Tham-Lü (Tai Lü Dhamma script). A comparison between these scripts is not the focus of this study; rather, they are mentioned here to make it clear that Lao manuscripts were written in numerous forms. Apart from



these scripts, other scripts such as Khòm<sup>46</sup> (a script which was widely used in the Central Thai (Siamese) manuscript tradition), Tham Khün,<sup>47</sup> modern Lao and Thai also appear in some of the manuscripts of Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s collection.

During production, it seems that the scribes select the scripts for writing. This means that some of them may have experience in reading and writing in many scripts, so that they can choose any of these scripts for their works. The orthography in their works are sometimes mixed; in essence, the scribes who know many scripts sometimes use several of these in the one text. The scribes thus provide readers with many scripts; the reason, however, why the manuscripts were not written in a single script is unclear.

Figure 2.1: Mixed scripts manuscript



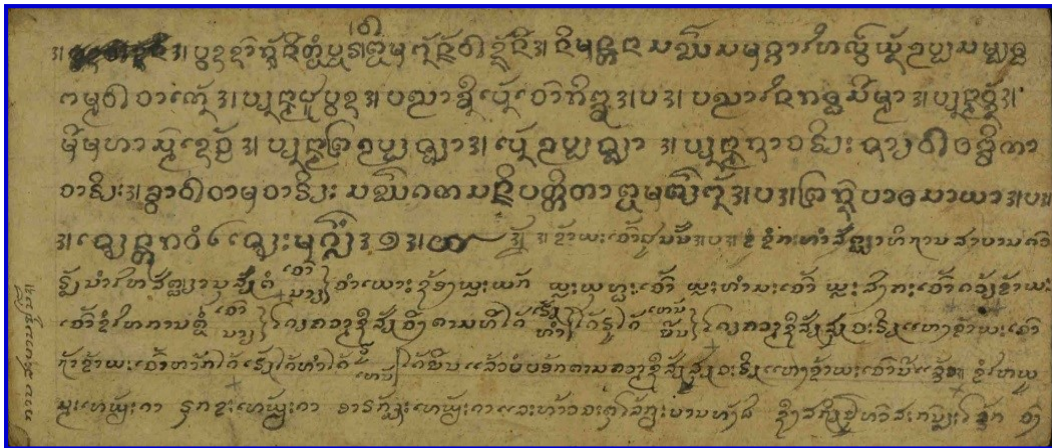
Some manuscripts, most of which are written on paper, are considered to be multi-script manuscripts. Furthermore, some manuscripts were written in a one script that is partly mixed with just one other. This usage appears in manuscripts that were written in Lao Buan mixed with Tham-Lao. Both a full script, sub-script and shortened words of Tham-Lao were frequently applied in the texts. However, the mixed script was generally used as a final consonant (see Figure 2.1 above). Some paper manuscripts containing

<sup>46</sup> For more details, see Igunma 2013: 1–8.

<sup>47</sup> Khün is the name of both a local division of an aboriginal people and their language that belongs to the great Tai ethno-linguistic family. Most Khün people live in the Chiang Tung area of the Shan States of modern day Myanmar (Burma). Like other Tai scripts, the Khün script was developed from the Mon script, so the characters in the Tham Khün script are similar to those of Tham-Lan Na, Tham Lao and Tham Lü scripts (Peltier 1987: pp. 1, 3, 7).

multiple texts were also written in multiple scripts, suggesting that each text might have been written by a different scribe with varying experiences and expertise. In addition, some scribes might know – and have experience in using – more than one script and applied these to their writings. Scribes who knew many scripts could choose which scripts to be applied in writing each particular text. Therefore, some pages of paper manuscripts that contain many texts were also written in many scripts.

Figure 2.2: Multiple-text and multiple-script manuscript



This page of the paper manuscript no. BAD-13-2-069, untitled, contains two texts written in two scripts. The first text, written in the Tham-Lao script, explains the traditional process of ordination; it seems that this text is an ordination leaf (*lap buat* ຫຼາບບວດ), which officially served as a certificate for an ordained monk. The ordination leaf contains important information such as the names of the ordained monk, his teacher, and the two monks who faced each other and chanted the text during the ordination. The second text, written in the Lao Buhan script dealt with a court case; it is a statement of sworn testimony.

Interestingly, the first text deals with a religious ceremony so it was written in the Tham-Lao script. The content of the second text is a sworn statement related to secular affairs; it was therefore written in the Lao Buhan script. However, this is not an absolute rule for using these scripts; rather, they were used according to the scribes’ understandings of orthographic systems of the scripts. However, these texts have further noticeable points. The first text has no title, but many symbols were inserted into the text which serve as indications denoting the beginning and end of each separate part of the text. In other words, these symbols help readers to understand the key points that the scribe is trying to convey. The scribe might have thought that if he wrote the text without these symbols, then his readers might have encountered difficulties understanding it.

Unlike the first text, the second one has some words written in the lefthand margin of the page – “ກ້ານສາບານຢູ່ນີ້”, literally, “a sheet of oath is here”. This serves as both a title of the text and to remind readers that they are about to start another text. Without the notations in the lefthand margin, we cannot know the correct title of the second text. Therefore, this work has a textual element to help the reader to understand it, whereas the first manuscript contains many symbols in aid of the same purpose that should be considered as non-textual elements. Both textual and non-textual elements are useful components that make the texts more accessible and understandable.

Traditionally, most manuscripts were written in the Lao vernacular and some of them were written in Pali. However, both Pali and vernacular languages were applied in writing some manuscripts as well. The story of Prince Vessantara is a good example of a manuscript which was written in this way. This story was composed first by using a Pali word then followed up with a translation and an explanation, usually in verse form. It appears that the manuscripts written in this style were not only used for reading and chanting, but they also served as a basic tool for learning Pali in a traditional manner.

Unlike palm-leaf manuscripts, paper manuscripts from the same collection were written with pens or white chalk depending on the colour of paper used. The majority of paper manuscripts were white so that they were written with pens; however, the blackened pages required white chalk for scribing. Different colours of ink were also used on the blackened paper (BAD-13-2-061, BAD-13-2-058).

Some manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode were made by using modern tools, such as ballpoint pens, typewriters, and correction fluid. More frequent, however, is the use of such modern tools in order to add comments or revisions to the manuscripts (see Chapter 5 for the use of modern tools and techniques in making manuscripts).

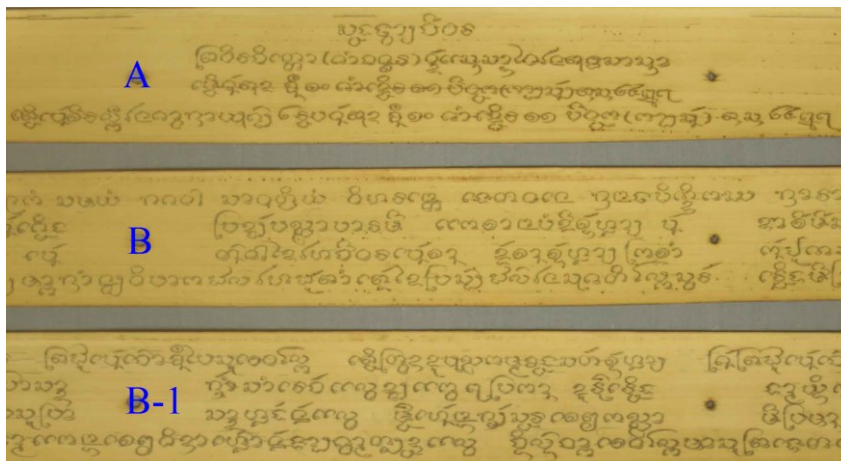
### 3.3 Sponsors, Donors and Scribe

The people who initiated the production of a manuscript were traditionally noted in that manuscript. This is similar to the manuscripts of Lan Na, which Hundius (1990: 27) describes as follows: “the name of the text [was] given together with information on the time and place where the holograph was written; the identity of the writer, and those who initiated or sponsored the making of it”. In Laos, information about the sponsor of the manuscript-making is usually denoted by the word *sang* (ສ້າງ) which together with other words forms the structure “*mai mi* (ພາຍມື) (there be) + (people’s names) + *dai sang* (ໄດ້ສ້າງ) (made) + (manuscript title)”. The word *sang* itself mainly means to build, to make, to construct, and to produce. In the context of Lao (and Tai) manuscript culture, *sang* not only

refers to the production, but also to the sponsorship of a manuscript (Hundius 1990: 29–30). Therefore, the names of the people that appear in the colophon of a manuscript may be the name of the donor/sponsor, the scribe, and/or someone who donated the manuscript to the monastery.

The people who initiated the process of manuscript making and whose names were left in the colophons of such manuscripts can be divided into two groups: monks and novices, and laypeople. Of all the manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, 154 manuscripts have colophons containing the names of the people who initiated their production. Some manuscripts contain the names of monks and the name of a novice, such as Phra Virachitto (Sathu Nyai Khamchan), Chinnathammo Phikkhu (Sathu Nyai Chanthalin), Sathu Phò Phan, Amaro Phikkhu Onsy, Pha Khanan Kunlavangso, and Novice Fan. Conversely, some manuscripts denote the names of laypeople, such as Chan Vandi, Chan Un Hüan, Sao Phomma, Sao Onsy, Nang Phia Khamla, Thit Niao and Thit Lek. However, only twenty-two manuscripts (14%) have colophons with the names of initiators<sup>48</sup> who are also testified as scribes. The names of the initiators noted in the colophons of the remaining manuscripts (85%) are just described as *phu sang* (ផ្លូវស្លា), which is, for the reasons stated above, difficult to define. One of these colophons mentions Sathu Nyai Khamchan as *phu sang*, shown in the figure below:

Figure 2.3: The meaning of the word *sang* (ស្លា)



<sup>48</sup> For more details about manuscript initiators mentioned as scribes, please see manuscript nos. BAD-13-1-0014, BAD-13-1-0015, BAD-13-1-0026, BAD-13-1-0074, BAD-13-1-0127, BAD-13-1-0128, BAD-13-1-0145, BAD-13-1-0155, BAD-13-1-0178, BAD-13-1-0189, BAD-13-1-0224, BAD-13-1-0232, BAD-13-1-0234, BAD-13-1-0327, BAD-13-2-032, BAD-13-2-033, BAD-13-2-034, BAD-13-2-035, BAD-13-2-03, BAD-13-2-037, BAD-13-2-038, BAD-13-2-039.

Colophon (A) reads, “ສອງຖວາຍຈິວອນ – ພະວິລະຈິດໂຕ (ຄຳຈັນ) ສ້າງໄວ້ໃນພູດທະສາສະໜາ – ເມື່ອ ວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປົວອກ (ກາບສັນ) ພ.ສ. ໒໔໘໗ – ເພື່ອເປັນທີ່ລະລຶກໃນຄາວອາຍຸຄົບ ໒ ຮອບ ວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປົວອກ (ກາບສັນ) ພ.ສ. ໒໔໘໗.” Translation: [This manuscript of] *Sòng Thwai Chivòn* (“The merit gained by giving a monk a robe”) was produced (*sang*) [probably copied] to support the Buddha’s teachings by Pha Virachitto (Khamchan) on Wednesday, the eleventh day of the waxing moon, in the tenth lunar month, the Year of the Monkey (*kap san* year), BE 2487 (corresponding to AD 1944, Wednesday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of September). [He produced this manuscript] for the commemoration of his birthday [completing] the second cycle [of the Year of the Animal]. (Then the date was repeated once again.)

In Figure 2.3, the meaning of the word *sang* seems not to indicate the act of producing the manuscript in general, but rather the process of writing specifically. Sathu Nyai Khamchan enjoyed literary works very much, and was especially interested in manuscripts. Therefore, it is reasonable to deduce that this manuscript was probably written by himself to commemorate his own birthday. In addition, the handwritings of the colophon (A) and of the text (B, B1) are the same; the colours of the leaves containing the colophon and the text are very similar; the darkness of the ink highlighting the incisions of colophon and text are the same, therefore it is reasonable to assume that they were done at the same time.

In practice, both ordained persons and laypeople were required to contribute to the work of manuscript making. An individual monk or a novice might be asked by a layperson, who would later become the donor of the manuscript, to copy a certain text. In contrast to the monks and novices with a specialisation in scribing, the preparation of essential materials, more precisely palm leaves and oil, was a more suitable task for laypeople. If laypeople were able to do copying, monks might be required to provide the expected manuscripts or to give advice. Hundius (1990: 31) demonstrates that in Lan Na both monastic and lay communities cooperated in the production of manuscripts. It also seems that the work of manuscript making of the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang was organized in the same way.

Interestingly, some manuscripts have numerous donors who are related by marriage or kinship. The donors can be classified as follows: 1) main donor (ມູລະສັດທາ)<sup>49</sup>; 2) main donor and his/her spouse (ມູລະສັດທາ ພ້ອມດ້ວຍຜົວ/ເມຍ); 3) main donor, his/her spouse, and their children (ມູລະສັດທາ ພ້ອມດ້ວຍຜົວ/ເມຍ ແລະລູກເຕົ້າ); 4) main donor, his/her spouse, their

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<sup>49</sup> The Lao word *mula sattha* (ມູລະສັດທາ) is a compound word derived from Pali: *mūla* (root, grounds) and *saddhā* (faith; belief). *Mula sattha* means a person who performs any act of merit-making in which other people can participate. In practice, a single donor is called *sattha* or *chao satha* (ເຈົ້າສັດທາ) (Thongkham 2003: 246).

children, and their parents (ມູລະສັດທາ ພ້ອມດ້ວຍຜົວ/ເມຍ, ລູກເດົ້າ ແລະພໍ່ແມ່); and 5) main donor, his/her spouse, their children, their parents, and other relatives (ມູລະສັດທາ ພ້ອມດ້ວຍຜົວ/ເມຍ, ລູກເດົ້າ, ພໍ່ແມ່ ແລະພັນທຸວົງສາ). This demonstrates that people who perform acts of merit-making together – by sponsoring the production of manuscripts – are usually relatives or close friends.

The religious practices which surround the formal sponsorship of copying manuscripts in Luang Prabang, and in Laos as a whole, are remarkable. When a manuscript has been made and donated to the Sangha, other people then have the chance to “re-donate” the same manuscript again (BAD-13-1-0300). After a manuscript is donated, it is considered the property of the Sangha. However, a layperson can request to donate the same manuscript again. The manuscript is then given to the layperson, after he or she has made a small donation, usually worth less than the manuscript. The manuscript is now formally the property of the layperson. If the manuscript is damaged, the layperson must repair it; this usually entails cleaning the manuscript and having it enclosed in a new wrapping cloth (*pha khamphi* / *pha hò nangsü* ຜ້າຄຳພີ/ຜ້າຫໍ່ໜັງສື). Finally, the then layperson donates the manuscript back to the Sangha once again during a ceremony, after which the manuscript becomes the property of the Sangha once more.

### 3.4 Manuscript owners

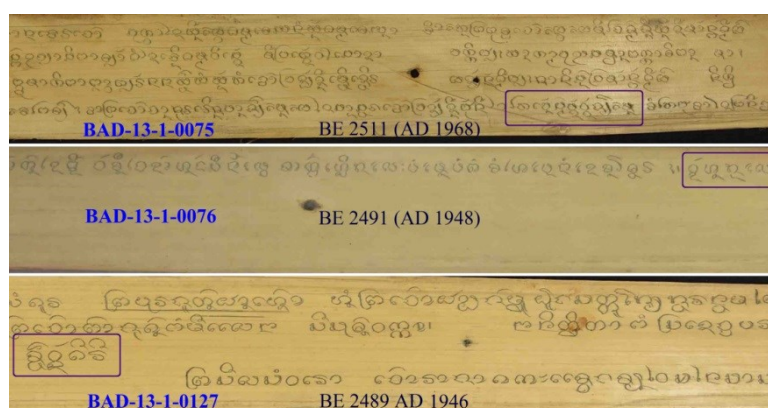
Religious manuscripts dedicated to Buddhism usually belong to the Sangha, but a number of manuscripts, both religious and secular, are the possessions of abbots and senior monks who are avid collectors of manuscripts. Furthermore, it seems that some manuscripts may temporarily belong to monks or novices who keep them for the study of Tham-Lao and for their sermons.

#### a) Monastic possessions

The aim of making and donating religious manuscripts is to support the teachings of Buddhism. This is known to the Lao Buddhist as “*sang vai nai phuttha sasana tap tò thao 5000 vatsa* ສ້າງໄວ້ໃນພູດທະສາສະໜາ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ້າ ໕໐໐໐ ວັດສາ” (literally meaning: “made and given to Buddhism [in order to support the continuation of Buddhism] until 5000 rainy retreats [years]”). However, some religious manuscripts contain information indicating that they are the possessions of a monastery (see figure 2.4 below). Therefore, not only do they belong to that monastery, but they also serve as indicator of the reputation of such a monastery – the higher number of manuscripts the monastery has as its own properties, the more famous it is.



Figure 2.4: Manuscripts belonging to monasteries



This figure shows that three manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0075, BAD13-1-0076 and BAD-13-1-0127 – belonged to other monasteries before they became the possession of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. The information in BAD-13-1-075 reads “*ໃຫ້ເປັນສິນສັດຂອງវັດឌ្យງ ឃ្មោ*” (literally, “for being property of Vat Siang Maen”), whereas in BAD-13-1-0127 it denotes, “*ຂອງវັດតិលី*” (literally, “[property] of Vat Khili”). The former indicates that the person who made and/or donated the manuscript wishes that it is solely the property of a particular monastery, probably the monastery situated in his home village. The latter, in contrast, only declares the ownership of the manuscript. The information left in BAD-13-1-0076 is somewhat different; it reads “*វັດហង្សឆ្នេរ*” (literally, “Vat Nòng” [Monastery Nòng]). This can be interpreted in three ways: 1) a scribe lived at Vat Nòng while he was writing/copying the manuscript; 2) the manuscript was written/copied at the same monastery; and 3) the manuscript belonged to Vat Nòng.

There is no known evidence which explains the relocation of manuscripts among local monasteries, but one possible reason is that the manuscripts were lent for copying or preaching because it is common for some monasteries to have only a limited number of texts at their disposal. Therefore, monks in such monasteries may need to borrow from other monasteries as required. This most commonly took place around the times that festivals and ceremonies were held. In some cases, the borrower never returned the text, possibly because the lender forgot about it, or because they thought it fit for the other monastery to keep the manuscript due to the sparse nature of the borrowing monastery’s collection.

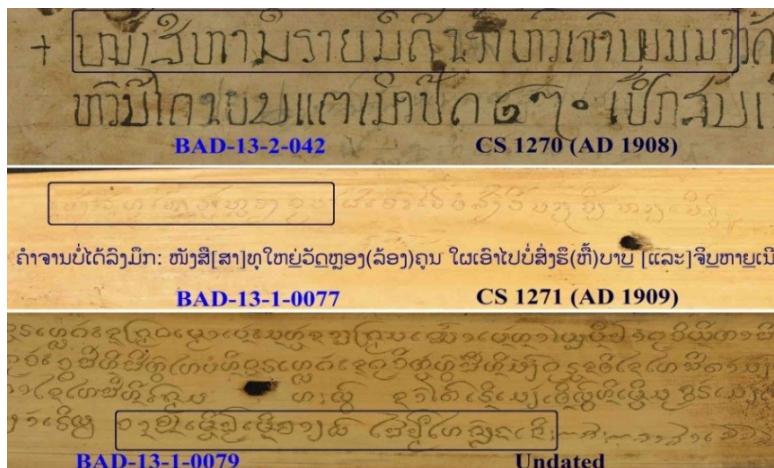
However, the fact that the manuscripts from three monasteries in figure 2.4 were found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan suggests other possibilities: for instance, the manuscripts might been given to him directly after the death of their owners, or they might have been collected by Sathu Nyai Khamchan because nobody was taking took of them. As a senior monk who loved reading religious manuscripts as sermons and working on

literary documents, he might have thought that manuscripts without owners would become damaged easily. Therefore, he collected, examined and utilized such manuscripts. In addition, he encouraged Buddhists to donate manuscripts in ritual ceremonies as an act of merit-making.

b) Private possessions

Some manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan contain information indicating that they belonged to particular people. Seemingly, these manuscripts were privately used and very important to their owners. The manuscripts not only contained the names of their owners, but also the owners’ attitudes toward the manuscripts (requests and curses) (see figure 2.5 below). The manuscripts might be lent by their owners without any notes and were rarely returned to the owners. This phenomenon, which frequently took place in the ancient times, is known to Lao Buddhists as “*nangsü sia / nangsü yüm bò song*” (ໜັງສືເສຍ/ໜັງສືຍືມບໍ່ສິ່ງ) (literally, ‘missing’ resp. ‘borrowed [but] unreturned manuscripts’).

Figure 2.5: Manuscripts belonging to particular people (private possessions)



Throughout figure 2.5, three private manuscripts – BAD-13-2-042, BAD-13-1-0077 and BAD-13-1-0079 – contain different information concerning the relationship between the manuscripts and their owners. Parts of a passage left in BAD-13-2-042 reads, “ໜັງສືຫາມີ ຮ້າຍມີດີຂອງຫົວເຈົ້າພົມມາ”, which literally means: “this manuscript of calculation for auspicious and inauspicious days belongs to Hua Chao Phumma.” Conversely, the following passage can be found in BAD-13-1-0077, “ໜັງສື[ສາ]ທຸໃຫຍ່ວັດລ້ອງຄູນ ໃຜເອົາໄປບໍ່ສິ່ງທີ່ ບາບ [ແລະ]ຈິບຫາຍເນີ”, which translates to: “this manuscript belongs to [Sa]thu Nyai Vat Lòng Khun, [he] wishes a person who borrows [the manuscript and] does not return [it to him] to be sinful [and] perished.” Finally, BAD-13-1-0079 notes, “ຈານຂຽນເມື່ອຢູ່ເມືອງຂາຍແລ ໃຜຍືມໃຫ້



ສົ່ງເມີ” meaning: [this manuscript belongs to] Chan Khian who lives at Müang Khai [village], [he politely requests] a person who borrows [the manuscript] to return [it to him].

It appears that the relation between BAD-13-2-042 and its owner was not especially solid because the owner just wrote a declaration of ownership on a verso of the front cover. This is because the owner might want to remind readers that the text was written by him. Any person who uses a text should follow the tradition of passing knowledge: in essence, that person should pay respect to the owner of the manuscript, otherwise he will obtain less respect from local people.

With regard to the passage in BAD-13-1-0077, it contains information that indicates a firm relationship between the manuscript and its owner. The owner might regularly use and recognize the text of this manuscript as an important element in his daily life because the text is a chant (*sut mon doek* ສູດມົນເດິກ). In addition, this manuscript contains several texts related to religious rites, and serves as a framework for conducting ceremonies. As such, the manuscript was an important point of reference for the owner to lead the performance of Buddhist ceremonies. However, passages left in the manuscript might not have been written by its owner but, perhaps, by a disciple of the manuscript’s owner. In other words, the owner might have given the manuscript to his close disciples to learn from. In turn, another monk or a novice could have borrowed the manuscript from this disciple. The borrower might then have forgotten to return the manuscript, so that the disciple wrote the curse on a blank leaf of the manuscript in Lao Buhan script with a stylus – incisions were not darkened, but they are all legible – after he found it. Through his annotation, the owner is reminding monks and novices, who borrowed the manuscript to return it to him. He also wishes that a person who disobeyed this reminder to be ruined as a consequence of his sinful actions. This wish may or may not be fulfilled, but the notice clearly reflects the borrower’s responsibility to return the manuscript to its rightful owner.

The passage found in BAD-13-1-0079 is a polite request from its owner. The owner and the scribe, probably the same person, seems to know that his manuscript would be borrowed someday so he left a passage as a postscript at the end of the text. The passage shows that the relationship between the manuscript and its owner is not as strong as it is the case for the second manuscript. In effect, the owner just left a note to inform readers that the manuscript belonged to him and that any person who borrowed the manuscript should return it to him. This also reflects the fact that the owner follows the traditional way of borrowing in which most lenders, apparently, do not like to ask for the return of their manuscripts; that is to say, it is preferable to remind owners unobtrusively borrowers and have them return the borrowed document of their own accords. In essence, a person who borrows something and does not return it, or an equivalent action, is recognized as a debtor. This is also supported by a Lao proverb, “*yüm bò sai pen ni thao tai* ຢືມບໍ່ໄຊ້ເປັນໜີ້ເກົ້າ

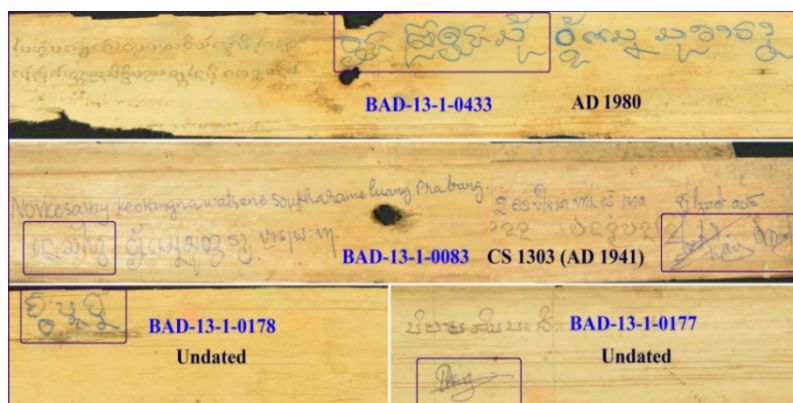
ຕາຍ”, which translates as: “[if you] borrow [but] do not return [you will] be in debt until [you] die.” Perhaps the owner of this manuscript thought that if any person borrowed his manuscript and did not return it then that person would be blamed by others and, as such, he had no need to curse the borrower specifically himself.

c) Temporary ownership

The traditional way of learning to read manuscripts, or more precisely to interpret variants of the Dhamma script, usually entails giving a particular manuscript to a newly ordained monk or novice. After this point, the manuscript is the responsibility of the receiving monk or novice who uses it to perform daily lessons. However, the duration of the monk’s or novice’s ownership of these manuscripts is not fixed. Even though they can read the manuscripts fluently, they can keep the manuscripts in their places and the manuscript are recognized their manuscripts, by other monks and novices. Whenever the manuscripts are required to recite texts to laypeople for sermons or ritual ceremonies, the monk or novice needs to use these manuscripts.

In practice, monks and novices – especially the newly ordained ones – must take care of the manuscripts and pay them much respect, otherwise they will be recognized by others as immoral persons (*khon nòk hit* ຄົນມອກຮີດ) with few learning abilities (*hian nangsü bò pòng* ຮຽນໜັງສືບໍ່ປ່ອງ). In short, manuscripts are considered to be sacred, especially those containing texts related to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. This means that placing manuscripts in unrespectable places and writing on these are forbidden. However, some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan and other monastic buildings in Vat Saen Sukharam contained, beyond their texts, information indicating temporary ownership (see figure 2.6 below).

Figure 2.6: Manuscripts belonging to particular people (temporary ownership)



This figure clearly shows that four manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0433, BAD-13-1-0083, BAD-13-1-00178 and BAD-13-1-0177 – contain newly added passages which were made by using a ballpoint pen (see Chapter 5 for more details). A passage left in BAD-13-2-0433 reads, “ຂອງພະທອງສຸກ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ” meaning: “[this manuscript] belongs to Monk Thongsuk of Vat Saen Sukharam.” In similar vein, BAD-13-2-0083 contains the following annotation, “ເນນສະໄຫວ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ ຫຼວງພະບາງ” that translates to: “[this manuscript belongs to] Novice Savai of Vat Saen Sukharam, Luang Prabang”. A signature also appears in this manuscript. Only the name of a novice, “ຈິວບຸນຈັນ” (Novice Bunchan) appears in BAD-13-2-0178, whereas a title and a signature appear in BAD-13-1-0177.

No doubt, the owner of the first manuscript in figure 2.6 (BAD-13-1-0433) is Monk Thongsuk, but we cannot be sure that the manuscript belonged to him up until he passed away. It is also possible that he disrobed and returned to his family, but left the manuscript at the monastery meaning that the manuscript became monastic property. As such, his ownership of such a manuscript was temporary, that is to say, only during the period of his monkhood. In other words, the manuscript was written and dated in 1980, but the passage within seems to have been made later by Monk Thongsuk who used it as a learning and preaching aid.

The second manuscript (BAD-13-1-0083) not only contains passages, but also two signatures and a rough handwriting in English. The passages were written with a ballpoint pen in three scripts (Tham, Lao, Roman) and in two languages (Lao and English). A passage written in English reads, “Novice Savay Keokangna, Wat Senesoukharam, Luang Prabang”, which corresponds to the equivalent written in Lao language, both in the Tham and Lao scripts as follows: “*nen savai [kaeo kang na] vat saen sukhalam luang phabang*” and “ເນນສະໄຫວ[ແກ້ວກາງນາ] ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ ຫຼວງພະບາງ”. The second passage written in Lao script reads, “*khò khòp chai nam than phu thet chong sok di duai* ຂໍຄອບ(ຂອບ)ໃຈນໍາທ່ານຜູ້ເຫດຈົ່ງໂຊກດີດ້ວຍ”, meaning: “[I would like to] thank the ones who use [this manuscript] for reading out as a sermon. May [all of you] be lucky.” The first passage simply declares the name of a person who is the owner of the manuscript (Novice Savay), whereas the second one is reflective of the attitudes of the person who wrote the passage (probably Novice Savay). In short, he seems to be proud of possessing the manuscript and he will be more than appreciative if other monks and novices use his manuscript for preaching. Therefore, he thanks such monks and novices and wishes them success. He then signs it in order to proclaim his ownership of the manuscript. In addition, a rough handwriting seems to represent three English letters (w/v-a-y), which may be the initials of the novice’s name.

According to its colophon, BAD-13-1-0083 was written in AD 1941 (the year of Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s ordination as monk). However, all of passages both in Lao and in English appear to have been added to this manuscript later on, most likely many years after

it was written. This is because in early 1940s the English language was not especially popular in Luang Prabang and a ball point would not have been easy to find. Even if a ballpoint pen was used at this time, it is unlikely that any ink annotations from such a device would survive until the present because palm leaves do not absorb liquids well and, thus, the ink fades away easily.

Unlike the first two manuscripts, the latter two works in this figure (BAD-13-1-0178 and BAD-13-1-0177) do not have any particularities, except for the owner's name and his signature. A name of a novice “ຈົວບຸນຈັນ” (Novice Bunchan) is written with a ballpoint pen in Tham-Lao script and appeared in the former, whereas the title of the text written with a ballpoint pen in Lao script and accompanied by a signature appears in the latter. None of the surrounding information certify that Novice Bunchan either owned the manuscript and/or left his signature inside. They do seem, however, to be familiar with the manuscripts; that is, they might have read and used these manuscripts a few times.

### **3.5 Manuscript production**

Generally speaking, manuscripts are made according to Buddhist demands, but the manner in which the manuscripts were written depended on the individual scribe. Therefore, the features of many manuscripts containing the same text, but copied by different scribes, can differ from each other. This suggests that manuscript production covers two main tasks: sponsorship and inscription.

#### **a) Demand for manuscript writing**

Traditionally, most manuscripts are copied from some particular texts/titles which are frequently requested by the one(s) who want to make manuscripts: in effect, the sponsor(s)/donor(s). After this, the copyist selects any manuscript containing the required text/title, copies it, and writes a colophon. The scribe is assumed to know the text well, whereas the sponsor(s)/donor(s) has less knowledge about details of its content. Undoubtedly, a newly-copied manuscript contains content which is similar to the content of the original because the scribe reads the master manuscript and then copies it. Veidlinger (2006: 124) explains that, “This is not surprising because the manuscripts were often being copied from exemplars located before the scribe's eyes, whereas the colophons were probably written directly by the scribe from his head.” In effect, the colophons were written according to the experience of the scribes or scribes in regard to the construction of colophons.

Manuscripts are frequently asked to be copied by laypeople who wanted to make merit by sponsoring manuscript writing. Hundius (1990: 29) also elucidates that: “Writing, or to be more precise, the engraving of manuscripts, was usually organized in such a way that individual members of the monastery or the lay community, in general former monks or novices, were asked to copy a *phuuk* (fasciculus), or several *phuuk*, each.” The scribe barely had any choice in the titles or stories himself. However, anyone who can write is able to select stories or titles according to his own wish if he wants to make a manuscript, especially if the scribe and the donor of the manuscript is the same person. This matter is noticeable when the name of the scribe does not possess any of the titles of respect comparable to that of a monk, novice, ex-monk or ex-novice. The titles that a monk might have in front of his name include: Khuba, Pha, Pha Khu, Nya Khu, Phikkhu, Sathu Nyai; for a novice: Chua, Ai Chua, Samanen, Nen; for an ex-monk: Chan, Thit, Nan, Khanan; and for an ex-novice: Siang. Examples of are: Chan Un Hüan (BAD-13-1-0075) and Thit Niao (BAD-13-2-036, BAD-13-2-038).

#### b) Pagination

In practice, each scribe copies a manuscript in his own way; nevertheless, one aspect that should be explained here is the pagination of manuscripts. The pagination of a paper manuscript, using numerals, is similar to the pagination of a modern book. Unlike paper manuscripts, however, palm-leaf manuscripts are mostly numerated according to Sanskrit orthography, especially manuscripts that contain short texts or stories. This kind of pagination uses the alphabetic system for counting the leaves of a fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript.

Interestingly, there are two ways to paginate manuscripts made of palm leaves: first, by counting by word/syllable, and second, in alphabetical order. The former begins with the first consonant, *k*, respectively combining with twelve vowels – *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, ai, o, au, am, ah*. Apart from the last one, these vowels are pronounced similar to the pronunciation of the equivalent vowels in Lao. Here, comes the words *ka, kā, ki, kī, ku, kū*, and so forth, which correspond to one, two, three, four, five, six, etcetra. In the case of a long text/story – in essence, a fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript comprising of more than twelve leaves – the remaining consonants, such as *kh, g, gh, ñ, c, ch, j, jh, ñ*, and so forth, will subsequently be required. See the tables below:

Table 2.3: Sanskrit vowels (SV)

SV.1	Common vowel									
	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long
Sanskrit	अ - a	आ - ā	इ - i	ई - ī	उ - u	ऊ - ū	ऋ - ṛ	ॠ - ṝ	ऌ - ḷ	ॡ - ḹ
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

SV.2	Diphthong				Anusvāra	Visarga
	Sanskrit	ए - e	ऐ - ai	ओ - o	औ - au	अं - ṁ
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2.4: Sanskrit consonants (SC)

SC.1	Hard	Hard and aspirate	Soft	Soft and aspirate	Nasals	
	Sanskrit	क - ka	ख - kha	ग - ga	घ - gha	
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sanskrit	च - ca	छ - cha	ज - ja	झ - jha	ञ - ña	Palatal
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sanskrit	ट - ṭa	ठ - ṭha	ड - ḍa	ढ - ḍha	ण - ṇa	Lingual
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sanskrit	त - ta	थ - tha	द - da	ध - dha	न - na	Dental
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sanskrit	प - pa	फ - pha	ब - ba	भ - bha	म - ma	Labial
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

SC.2	Guttural	Palatal	Lingual	Dental	Labial	
	Sanskrit		य - ya	र - ra	ल - la	
Pagination		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sanskrit		श - śa	ष - śha	स - sa		Sibilant
Pagination				✓		
Sanskrit	ह - ha					Liquid
Pagination	✓					

Developed from Müller (1866: 2) and Whitney (1962: 2–3)

Nonetheless, numerous scribes do not begin the pagination of manuscripts with the first consonant /k/; they use another consonant instead. They do, however, follow the alphabetical order of the vowels. This always happens when a fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript which comprises less than ten leaves. Furthermore, some scribes prefer the vowel /ò/ of Lao over the vowel /a/ of Sanskrit. Such scribes may be familiar with the consonants of the Lao – combining no other vowels – which are supposed to be read as they are combined with the /ò/.

For pagination according to alphabetical order, Pali orthography is utilised in place of that of the Sanskrit. The Pali language has only eight vowels – *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o* – less than Sanskrit, but all of these are used when numerating the fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript, whereas the Sanskrit diphthongs /ai/ and /ao/ are only partly applied. All the vowels of the Pali are placed in the same order and pronounced in the same way as in Sanskrit. The pagination of the leaves – according to Pali orthography – begins with the vowels and is followed by the consonants (see table 2.5).

Apart from different approaches to pagination, some scribes prefer cardinal numbers to order the fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript. This approach to pagination is required if the fascicle the manuscript is very large; that is to say, it comprises hundreds of leaves. As such, the manner in which a large number – comprising many numerals, especially more than two figures – must be presented. Both words and numerals are used to indicate a sum which is more than one hundred. For instance, the number “125” may be recorded as “hundred 25 (*hòì 25*)” or “hundred 205 (*hòì 205*)”. The latter may be confusing to some readers because it consists of three figures; nevertheless, it should be read as “two hundreds and five”. But it cannot be read so, although the word “hundred” is missing. One striking observation, though, is that the figure of “zero” – located between the two and the five – is smaller than the other figures in the group. This clearly demonstrates that its function is not equivalent to either that of the two or the five.

Traditionally, the pagination was only written in the centre of the left-hand margin of the second page of each leaf, thus demonstrating that palm-leaf manuscripts are divided by leaf, not page. Some manuscripts kept in Sathu Nyai Khamcha’s abode were numerated by both words and numbers. The numeral was mostly written in the left-hand margin of the first page of each leaf, whereas the numerated word was placed in the traditional manner.

The different ways of counting the leaves of various manuscripts indicate that the Buddhist scholars of Luang Prabang have established their own rather idiosyncratic pagination system for palm-leaf manuscripts. Both traditional numerals and the orthographic system of Sanskrit and Pali have been applied in order to list the leaves of manuscripts. The Pali alphabet has less letters than Sanskrit (see table 2.5 and 2.6 below). In practice, however, the alphabet of these languages have not been put in use, they are replaced with the Tham-Lao script and the numerals of the Lao. This suggests that the scribe or writer of the Buddhist community in towns apply modern techniques when writing/copying the manuscripts (see Chapter 5 for details).

Table 2.5: Pali vowels (PV)

PV	Common vowel						Diphthong	
	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long		
Pali	𑖀 - a	𑖁 - ā	𑖂 - i	𑖃 - ī	𑖄 - u	𑖅 - ū	𑖆 - e	𑖇 - o
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2.6: Pali consonants (PC)

PC.1	Mute consonant					Nasal
	Hard	Hard and aspirate	Soft	Soft and aspirate	Soft and aspirate	
Pali	𑖐 - ka	𑖑 - kha	𑖒 - ga	𑖓 - gha	𑖔 - ña	Guttural
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pali	𑖕 - ca	𑖖 - cha	𑖗 - ja	𑖘 - jha	𑖙 - ña	Palatal
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pali	𑖚 - ṭa	𑖛 - ṭha	𑖜 - ḍa	𑖝 - ḍha	𑖞 - ṇa	Cerebral
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pali	𑖟 - ta	𑖠 - tha	𑖡 - da	𑖢 - dha	𑖣 - na	Dental
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pali	𑖥 - pa	𑖦 - pha	𑖧 - ba	𑖨 - bha	𑖩 - ma	Labial
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
PC.2	Semivowel	Liquid	Liquid	Semivowel	Miscellaneous	
Pali	𑖪 - ya	𑖫 - ra	𑖬 - la	𑖭 - va		
Pagination	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Pali	𑖮 - sa	𑖯 - ha	𑖰 - ḷa	° - ṃ		
Pagination	✓	✓	✓			
	Sibilant	Aspirate	Liquid	Niggahita		

Developed from Geiger (1994: 2); Mishra (1986: 7–20); Perniola (1997: 1–3); Silva (1995: ix–x)

As noted above, the margins of palm-leaf manuscripts often contain important information so the layout of the left and right margins must be elucidated upon. The margins are functionally equal to each other and about five centimetres in width. The left-hand margins performs important functions as it contains the numerations of the manuscripts, whereas the right-ones remain blank. However, only the leaves which contain the main text or story are numerated. The first leaf of the fascicle also serves as a front cover, known in Lao as *bai lop na* (ໃບຫຼົບໜ້າ), and the last leaf is the back cover or *bai lop lang* (ໃບຫຼົບຫຼັງ). Some manuscripts comprise one or more blank leaves between the last leaf of the fascicle (back cover) and the last leaf containing the main text. Such blank leaves were added to the fascicles to leave space for writing colophons later on.



### c) Manuscript margins

The left-hand margin of the first page of the first leaf of a palm-leaf manuscript traditionally contains the title or name of the story. Furthermore, the left-hand margin of some palm-leaf and paper manuscripts note the separation of various texts or sections. These indicate that the left-hand margins of the leaves, where some additional data or information is often inscribed, are convenient places to note observations because the writing system used for the writing/copying of the manuscripts is written from left to right in horizontal lines. A reader or user, thus, can perceive information written in the left-hand margins more readily than those written in the right-hand margins. Therefore, the left-hand margins serve not only as important areas for writing the title or the names of a manuscript, but also for listing the number of the leaf in palm-leaf manuscripts.

The pagination and the name of a fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript that contains a long text or story, written over several fascicles, are also written in the left-hand margin. Finot (1959: 326) elaborates:

In the left-hand margin of the first page the scribe writes the title of the work and the number of the *phuk*. The first *phuk* is called *phuk ton*, “initial part”, the last is called *pay* (= Siam. *play*) “last part”, the others are given a number; *phuk dieu* means that the text is complete in one single part.

With regard to this statement, the first fascicle is called *phuk ton* (ផ្សារត្រីប) and the last one *phuk pai* (ផ្សារបាយ), whereas the pagination of the others, between the first and the last fascicles, starts with the word *phuk* followed by the respective number of the fascicle. In other words, the first and the last fascicles of a set of palm-leaf manuscripts, containing a long text, are numbered in words, whereas the other fascicles of the set are counted in numbers.

It seems that long texts found in the domicile of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, written on palm leaves and constructed from more than two fascicles, differ from the features of those mentioned in Finot’s statement above. The first fascicle is still called *phuk ton*, but the last one is not called *phuk pai*. This last fascicle is denoted as *phuk* followed by the number of the last fascicle. For instance, if a palm-leaf manuscript comprises nine fascicles, the first fascicle of that manuscript is called *phuk ton* and the last one *phuk 9* or fascicle nine (see Figure 2.7 below).

Figure 2.7: The names of the fascicles of a bundle of a palm-leaf manuscript



Manuscript no. BAD-13-1-0279, written in [Chula]sakarāt 1236 (AD 1874), is entitled *Susavannachak* (The Story of Prince Susa Vannachak). This manuscript comprises 200 palm leaves which are divided into nine fascicles. The first fascicle was named *phuk ton* and the last one, *phuk kao* (fascicle nine), not *phuk pai*. Furthermore, the last fascicle of four other long manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0058 comprised six fascicles, BAD-13-1-0167 twelve fascicles, BAD-13-1-0281 six fascicles, and BAD-13-1-0296 four fascicles. In addition, long palm-leaf manuscripts found in Vat Xiang Thòng, Xiang Muan and Vat Khili (three monasteries) were also marked by numbers, not by the word *pai*. This illustrates that the manner in which the fascicles of long palm-leaf manuscripts kept in these monasteries were paginated differs somewhat from Finot’s observations.

#### d) Long text manuscripts

Apart from the pagination of the fascicles (*phuk*) comprising a bundle (*sum*)<sup>50</sup> of a palm-leaf manuscript, there are other manners of dividing a text or story into numerous fascicles. Generally speaking, the separation is made according to the contents of the text – like the chapter of a book. This results in each fascicle consisting of a different numbers of leaves. The story of Prince Vessantara is a good example. This story is frequently narrated in sixteen palm-leaf fascicles and each fascicle has its own title/name. In fact, the original story only entailed thirteen parts or sub-titles. These are Thatsaphòn, Himmaphan, Thanakhan, Vannaphavet, Suisaka, Chunlaphon, Mahaphon, Kuman, Matthi, Sakkaban,

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<sup>50</sup> The Lao word *sum* (ຊຸມ) generally means group, but it is used to define a bundle of many palm-leaf fascicles containing a single text or story.

Mahalat, Sakkati, and Nakhòn. Three extra parts are formed by Part Two, Thanakhan, Part Three, Himmaphan, and Part Ten, Kuman. Each of these parts is also divided into two subsections. The titles of these subsections begin with the name of the part and are followed by *ton* (first, initial) and *pai* (last). Thus the titles of the divisions are: Himmaphan Ton, Himmaphan Pai, Thanakhan Ton, Thanakhan Pai, Kuman Ton, and Kuman Pai. In other words, they are divided in a fashion similar to the pagination of fascicles.

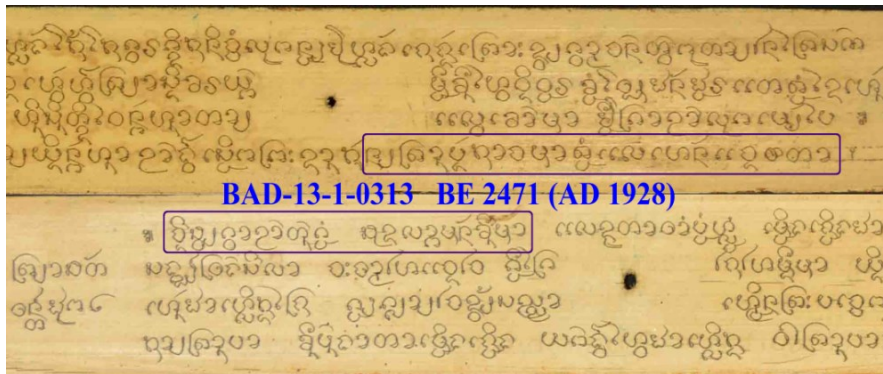
Another way of dividing a text or story into numerous fascicles is dependent on the numbers of leaves and their content. As noted, palm-leaf manuscripts are mostly numbered according to Sanskrit orthography. A variety of long texts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan and written over many fascicles of palm leaves, moreover, were written according to a certain rule: each fascicle comprises twenty-four inscribed leaves (ລາມເນື້ອໃນ). These leaves correspond to Sanskrit orthography, but each of the twelve vowels combine with two consonants ( $12 \times 2 = 24$ ). The manuscript BAD-13-1-0281, entitled *Suvannamekha Ma Khon Kham* (A Golden Haired Dog) is a good example. This manuscript comprises six fascicles and each fascicle consists of twenty-four inscribed leaves. Not only does each fascicle contain the main text, each one begins with an introductory text and ends with a concluding remark as well. This undoubtedly demonstrates that each part of the text, written in each fascicle, has been completed in its entirety.

The manuscript BAD-13-1-0322, entitled *Bualaphantha Phuk Sòng*, was divided according to the leaf numbers. The story was written on thirty-seven short palm leaves. The last leaf was marked by the Lao words *bai pai phuk sòng* (the last leaf of fascicle two), after which one extra leaf was added to the system of pagination according to Sanskrit orthography. In fact, the first leaf was numbered as *pa*, the twelfth *pah*, the thirteenth *pha*, the twenty-fourth *phah*, the twenty-fifth *ba*, the thirty-sixth *bah*. According to this rule, the thirty-seventh leaf had to be numbered as *bha*; however, it was numbered as *bai pai phuk sòng* instead. This suggests that the scribe tried to complete this part in fascicle two. After the combination twelve vowels and three consonants ( $12 \times 3 = 36$ ) was applied to count the leaves, the scribe left a note remarking that this fascicle included an extra leaf. In other words, he did not want to use the word *bha* for the pagination of the last leaf in his work. Another possibility is that the original manuscript from which the scribe copied might have consisted of thirty-six leaves, but his handwriting was slightly larger than the original. Consequently, this, in turn, necessitated an additional leaf to complete that section of the story.

The manuscript BAD-13-1-0313, entitled *Phaya Satthon* – comprising two fascicles – is one of the manuscripts that was strictly written in accordance with the traditional

system of Sanskrit orthography. The first leaf of the first fascicle begins its pagination with the word *ka* and the last *khah*, whereas the first leaf of the second fascicle begins its pagination with *ga* and the last *ghah*. The pagination of each fascicle strictly adheres to the system which combines twelve vowels with two consonants. It appears, thus, that the scribe was more concerned with the rules of pagination than the actual content of the manuscript itself. Indeed, the main text of the first fascicle does not even end with a concluding remark. Similarly, the second fascicle does not begin with an introductory text either. As further evidence of this pendant concern with pagination orthodoxy, the second page of the last leaf of the first fascicle ends its last sentence on the first page of the first leaf of the second fascicle. In other words, the sentence was divided between two different fascicles (see figure 2.8 below).

Figure 2.8: Sample of one sentence partially written in two fascicles



A partial sentence written on the last page of the first fascicle reads: *nai phan bang-at ma phò lae hen chaeng ta* (A)

A partial sentence written on the first page of the second fascicle reads: *chüing suai ao ton khò sut lak man khün ma* (B)

(A + B): *nai phan bang-at ma phò lae hen chaeng ta **chüing** suai ao ton khò sut lak man khün ma* (ນາຍພານບັງອາດມາພໍ້ແລະເຫັນແຈ້ງຕາຈຶ່ງສວຍເອົາຕີ້ນຄໍລາກຊຸດມັນຂຶ້ນມາ). Meaning: “A hunter accidentally came and saw [it] with his eyes [and he] thus seized its neck and pulled it up.”

The combination of two partial sentences (in Lao) was supported by the use of the word *chüing* (then; after that). Nonetheless, this sentence was separated and written in two fascicles. This clearly demonstrates that the scribe paid close attention to the numbers of palm leaves in order to form a twenty-four-leaf fascicle in accordance with the Sanskrit counting system detailed above. In short, the scribe followed the rule counting palm leaves

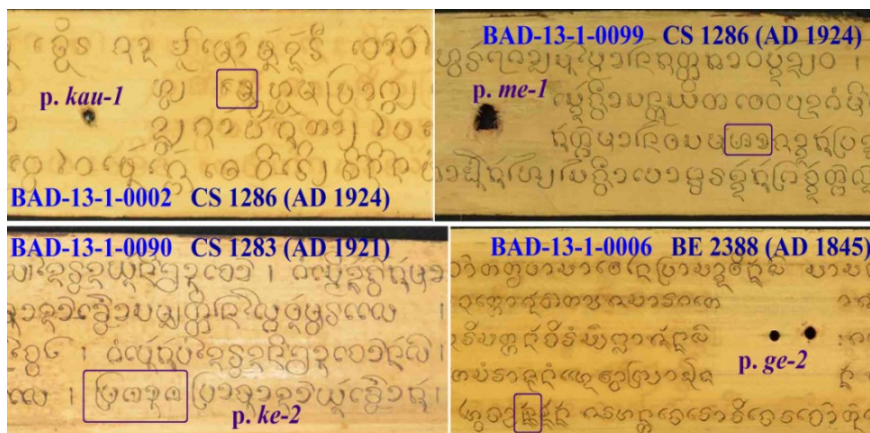
rather than ensuring that the sentence remained complete its entirety. Another possibility, conversely, is that the scribe wanted to make the text suitable to string together as one fascicle later on if required.

e) Deletions and corrections

It appears that some manuscripts were corrected at the same time that they were being written. This means that some scribes were very meticulous in ensuring the accuracy of the texts that they were producing to the extent that they revised the incisions of the text after each section was finished. However, a revision at this stage is very difficult because the incisions are barely legible (Agrawal 1982: 85, 1984: 32). It is possible that some mistakes remained in the texts and confounded later readers. This matter was/is also considered by senior monks who possess in-depth knowledge of the texts. In order to minimise mistakes, these monks would check the text regularly and make corrections if required (see chapter 5 for further discussion of this).

Generally speaking, corrections made by the scribes writing the texts were based on scratching out or marking dots in unwanted or incorrect words and replacing them with the correct prose. And yet deleted words still remain in the texts and are easily detected by astute readers. Most of the characters of unwanted words were usually scratched out or marked, thus demonstrating that scribes sometimes misspelled words. Indeed, scribes indentified errors as they wrote, deleted mistakes, and then continued on copying the manuscript. As these corrections were made concomitantly with the production of the manuscript, the darkness of the correct incisions and the deleted words are similar. If deletions were done later – more precisely after the incisions of the texts were made legible by applying black paint prepared by mixing lamp-black or charcoal powder in oil (Agrawal 1982: 85) – the scratches of deleted words would be noticeably darker or lighter than the incisions.

Figure 2.9: Deletion marks

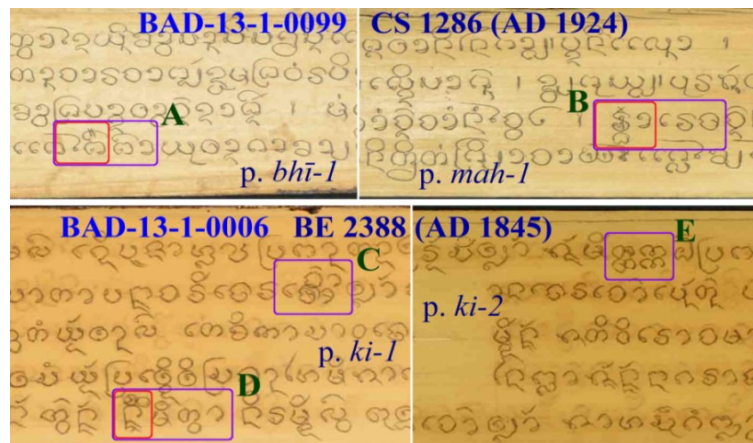




This figure shows that four manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0002, BAD-13-1-0099, BAD-13-1-0090, and BAD-13-1-0006 – contain deletions with no replacements. The deleted syllable in the first manuscript in this figure is *mae* – the first syllable in various compound words such as *mae nam* (river), *mae haeng* (lever) and *mae lek* (magnet) – both the consonant *m* and vowel *ae* were scratched out. In the second one, *ha* which might have been the second syllable in *maha* (big) was deleted. This syllable was marked by three dots, two dots on the consonant *h* and one dot on the vowel *a*. In the third one, an expression, *pakan nūng* (by the way; another way) that was formed by one word and the number one, was marked by four dots: to be precise, the consonants *p*, *k*, the vowel *a*, and the number one, were each marked with a dot. In the last manuscript, the demonstrative pronoun *nan* (that) was scratched out, seemingly only an initial consonant, *n*, was deleted.

In some manuscripts not every character of a deleted word was marked. In practice, only the initial and final consonants in wrong words were scratched out or marked. This may cause readers and users, especially those with less experience in reading manuscripts, to misinterpret or misread the text (see Figure 2.10). Furthermore, some corrections were made by adapting the characters in miswritten words. This demonstrates that the shapes of such characters are similar to the shapes of the correct ones.

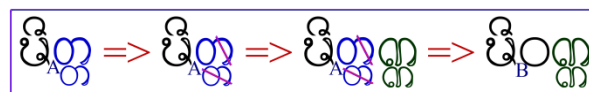
Figure 2.10: Characters that were scratching out and marked by dots



This figure illustrates that two manuscripts, BAD-13-1-0099 and BAD-13-1-0006, contain different deletions. These were marked by scratching out some characters in the wrong word or syllable and replacing them with the correct ones. BAD-13-1-0099 contains two corrections in two words, one in each word. The first one (A) is a compound word in Lao, *phai fa* ‘ໄພ່ຟ້າ’ (citizen; common people). A deletion was made in the first word of the compound by scratching out a sign, more precisely a superscript, that was written above

the consonant *ph*; with the sign above it *ph* has to be pronounced as *f*.<sup>51</sup> There is no replacement in this word, but if the sign above the consonant *ph* had not been scratched out the compound would have read *fai fa* “ໄຟຟ້າ” (electricity), which does not fit the context of this sentence. The second word (B) in the first manuscript in this figure that contains a deleted mark is the word *dhāretha* (“you should bear in mind”), which originates from Pali.<sup>52</sup> A miswritten consonant in the first syllable of this word, /r/, was scratched out and replaced with consonant /dh/ under it, so that the remaining vowel *ā* has to combine with /dh/. Without this correction, the word would have read *rāratha* – which has no meaning.

The second manuscript in this figure, BAD-13-1-0006, contains three corrections in three words, one in each word. The first word (C) that was corrected is the Lao word *chao* ເຈົ້າ (you; senior; owner; ruler), it was miswritten as *thao* ເຖົ້າ (old), which does not match its context. Therefore, the scribe scratched out the consonant /th/ and the vowel /a/ and replaced them with the consonant /ch/ written in superscript above it and the vowel /a/. The second word (D) that contains deletion marks is the word *nimitvā* (aim; sign; omen; phenomenon), which originates from Pali.<sup>53</sup> The miswritten part is in the first syllable *ni*, which was first written as *nīn*. To correct it, the scribe scratched out the vowel /ī/ and the final consonant /n/ that was written below the initial consonant /n/, and then wrote the vowel /i/ behind the scratched out /ī/. If this syllable had not been corrected, this word would be *nīnmitvā* – which, again, has no meaning. The third word (E) with a deletion mark is another word originating from Pali: *vaṇṇa* (appearance; colour of skin).<sup>54</sup> This word was first miswritten because it followed the Lao word ມີ *mi*. The scribe originally wrote the consonant /t/ twice: once as the final consonant and the second time as the initial consonant, probably forming the Pali word *mitta* (friend). Again, this second word does not match the context of the rest of the sentence. Thus, the scribe scratched out the second consonant /t/ that was written below the first one. The scribe adapted the shape of the remaining consonant /a/ to the shape of consonant /v/ by scratching out its back part (see the box below for a graphic representation of how this corrective process was achieved).



<sup>51</sup> In Tham-Lao script, like in the Lao alphabet, the shapes of the consonant *ph* and *f* are similar. In the Lao alphabet *f* differs from *ph* simply because it has a tail (ຟ – ຟ). Conversely, in the Tham-Lao script *f* has a sign, or more precisely a tail, above it (ຸ – ຸ).

<sup>52</sup> For more details about the meaning of *dhāretha*, please see Davids and Stede 1925 pp. 381–382.

<sup>53</sup> For more details about the meaning of *nimitvā*, please see *Ibid*, p. 410.

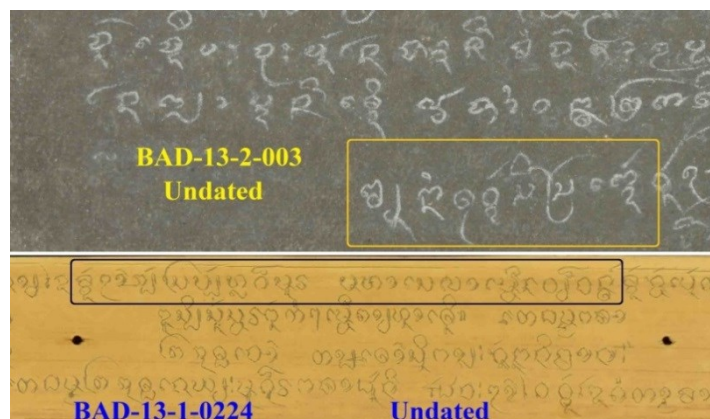
<sup>54</sup> For more details about the meaning of *vaṇṇa*, please see *Ibid*, p. 662.

This diagram shows that the front part of the consonant /t/ (A) is almost the same as the shape of consonant /v/ (B). Therefore, the scribe might have thought that there was no need to rewrite the consonant /v/. Instead, he scratched out the unwanted part of consonant /t/ and used its remaining part to combine with /ṇṇ/ forming *vaṇṇa*; *mi* (to have, get) was separated and used as one word. This process, hence, results in the word *mi vaṇṇa* (to have colour of skin), which fits with the overall context of the phrase. This indicates that these corrections were completed at the same time as the manuscript was being copied.

#### f) Manuscript exemplars

Some manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan seem to have been produced in accordance with the aims of the scribes. This means some scholars concerned with the knowledge of Lao Buddhists tried to find a way to pass on important information about religious and non-religious subjects from one generation to the next. Two manuscripts, BAD-13-2-003 and BAD-13-1-0224, are good examples of manuscripts that were seemingly produced with such concerns.

Figure 2.11: Manuscript exemplars



The information in the boxes in this figure inform us of sources from which BAD-13-2-003 and BAD-13-1-0224 were copied. The message of BAD-13-2-003 (in the box) reads, “ຂຽນນຳ[ສາ]ທຸວັດສີສະເກດ”, which literally means: “[I] wrote [this text] with [Sa]thu Vat Sisaket” (a senior monk of Vat Sisaket). One interpretation of this annotation is that Sathu Vat Sisaket dictated the text of this manuscript and the writer noted it down, rather than copying it from a master copyt. This paper manuscript also contains various short texts related to astrology, prayer, the Pali language, and other notes. The text related to prayer is quite short, written on two pages, but the writer left a message below. The writer seems to ask permission from Sathu Vat Sisaket to learn and write the prayer with him. Another



aspect of this message is that the writer does not mention the name of the senior monk with whom he wrote the text, but, rather, documents his residence instead (Vat Sisaket). This could indicate that such a senior monk was well-known; it is likely, for instance, that he was the abbot of Vat Sisaket or, at the very least, one of the monks in this monastery who was regarded to be of high morality and consistently followed the Buddha's teachings.

If the Vat Sisaket mentioned in this manuscript is the same as the present-day monastery of Vat Sisaket<sup>55</sup> in Vientiane, it appears that this type of knowledge – detailing a petition to deities for courage and strength – was transmitted from Vientiane to Luang Prabang. This also reveals that Buddhists in the two cities communicated with each other and exchanged information. No details regarding the master copy of this text is given, but the message tells us that the text was not composed by the writer: he/she was permitted to read, learn and copy by the grace of its owner, that is, the one who was addressed as Sathu Vat Sisaket. Evidently, the writer wanted to inform readers how he was able to study the manuscript, so that others would be able to follow his example and obtain knowledge about other manuscripts in the same way.

The second manuscript in this figure, BAD-13-1-0224 (undated), is entitled Phuttha Saya Mungkhun, which is derived from Pali and also known as the *Buddha Jayamaṅgala* (The Buddha's prosperous victory). It has a long colophon which reads, “ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ຈາມວັນດີ ອິນທະວັດ ບ້ານໜອງຊາຍ ໄດ້ຄັດເອົາກັບສະບັບໜູວງມູລະມະຫາເສລາເມືອງວຽງຈັນ ຄັດອອກ[ຈາກສະບັບເດີມເຊິ່ງ] ເປັນຕົວທໍາເມືອງມາຂຶ້ນໃສ່ໂບລານ [ເພື່ອ]ໄວ້ໃຫ້ແກ່ປຸກຊະນະເຈົ້າຜູ້ສົນໃຈ ຈົ່ງຄ່ອຍພິຈາລະນາດູສືບສ້າງສອນກັນຕ່າງເມື່ອ ພາຍໜ້າເຫິນ...” The translation reads as follows:

“I, Chan Vandi Inthavat, [living at] Ban Nong Sai (village), copied [this manuscript] from a version that belonged to Luang Mula Maha Sela, who lived in Vientiane. [I transcribed it from the original that was written] in Tham-Lan Na [into Tham-Lao and wrote it] on palm leaves in order to give it to ordinary people (ແກ່ປຸກຊະນະ) who were interested in it. Please consider and teach each other from one generation to the next consistently.”

The message in this colophon clearly illustrates that this manuscript was transliterated from a certain exemplar written in Tham-Lan Na script and in Kham Müang language (the Tai language of northern Thailand). As a former monk, Chan Vandi, the writer of this manuscript, learnt that the number of religious manuscripts written in the Tham-Lan Na

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<sup>55</sup> Vat Sisaket is a common name of Vat Satasahatsaram, a famous monastery in Vientiane. This monastery was built in AD 1818, during the reign of Chao Anu (r.1803–1827) (Sila 2001: 133–136).

script and kept in monasteries during his monkhood was not small. However, some Buddhists, especially monks and novices, had no ability to read such manuscripts, so that he took it upon himself to rectify this and reproduce this manuscript by transliterating Tham-Lan Na to Tham-Lao script and translating Kham Mūang into Lao language.

This manuscript appears to have been produced according to the private aims of the writer: it was intended to teach and instruct others. In other words, the writer wanted this text to be studied and disseminated further. The last part of the colophon supports this hypothesis given that it reads “ໃຜຈະເອົາໄວ້ວັດໃດກໍຕາມ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າບໍ່ມີຄວາມຫ້າມຫວງເລີຍ [ເພາະໄດ້]ໃຫ້ເປັນທຳມະທານແລ້ວ”; that is to say, “I did not forbid anyone to keep [this manuscript] at any monastery because [I] already gave it as the Gift of Dhamma (*thamma than* ທຳມະທານ).” This strongly suggests that the writer produced this manuscript with the aim of benefiting of all Buddhists, in essence, to help facilitate the continuation and spread of Buddhism.

Even though the writer did not date his work, academically, this manuscript reveals a number of noticeable points: first, it provides us with information vis-à-vis the exemplar and its owner, the script and language in which it was written and the person who transliterated it. Second, the family name of the transliterator appears in the colophon. As such, it is likely that this manuscript was not written before AD 1945, because it is only compulsory for the Lao people to use their surnames from 1 January 1944 (Nhoy 1959d: 190).

### 3.6 Colophons

The colophons of the manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan can be divided into two categories: 1) colophons written before the main text and appearing on the first folio, and 2) colophons written after the main text and appearing on the last folio. Colophons are mostly, but not always, written on separate leaves of the same manuscripts. This enables us to further subdivide the categories of colophons according to those written on separate leaves and those which are not. The colophons and the main text(s) were not always written by the same people and the dates mentioned in the colophons are not always the dates signifying the completion of the manuscript. Conversely, these dates may relate rather to dates of the donation of the manuscripts, rather than completion of the manuscripts (BAD-13-1-0157, BAD-13-1-0218, BAD-13-1-0280). Furthermore, some colophons are written following behind the main texts or concluding remarks (BAD-13-1-0058, BAD-13-1-0079, BAD-13-1-0160).

The structure of the colophons in the manuscripts retrieved from the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan are wide and varied. Nonetheless, such colophons are commonly written and arranged according to a particular structure comprised of eight parts. They are a) Era,

traditionally the Minor Era (Pali: *cūlasakarāja*); b) Date, which includes Year of the Animal, lunar month, fortnight, day of the week and Day of the Animal (Zodiac Day); c) Time, commonly beginning with *nyam* (ຍາມ) (a particular time of a day) and followed by the name of it; d) Initiator(s), possibly a scribe, sponsor(s) and/or donor(s); e) Title, which is occasionally replaced with a general term for palm-leaf manuscripts, *nangsü phuk ni* (ໜັງສືຜູກນີ້) and paper manuscript, *phap lem/nuai ni* (ພັບເຫຼັ້ມ/ໜ່ວຍນີ້) (both of which mean “this manuscript”); f) Objective(s), commonly aimed at ensuring the continuation of Buddhism for a total of five thousand years and merit-making; g) Wishes, usually indicating that the initiator(s) wishes for his/her favoured circumstances in this life, the next and eventually the final acquisition of *nibbāna*; and h) Concluding remarks, mostly in Pali. Of these, a, b, c, f, and g will be discussed respectively.

#### a) The Minor Era and beyond

Together with the Minor Era (Pali: *cūlasakarāja*), the Greater Era (Pali: *mahāsakarāja*), Buddhist and Common Eras also appear in the colophons of some palm leaf manuscripts retrieved from the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. Sometimes these are mentioned alone; the Buddhist Era sometimes appears together with two others, the Minor and the Common Eras<sup>56</sup>; but the Minor Era is never paired with the Common Era. The reason for this may be that the Minor Era is not directly linked to the Buddha (but rather to a king in present Burma who was a devotee Buddhist). The Minor Era is considered to start in AD 639 with the year 1.

The Greater Era, which is recognized as commencing in AD 78<sup>57</sup> is noted, for example, in the colophons of the two manuscripts: BAD-1-13-0058 and BAD-1-13-0281. However, it is possible that this was a careless mistake of a person who wrote the colophons (see below):

BAD-1-13-0058: ມະຫາສັງກາດລາຊາໄດ້ ໑໒໑໕ ຕົວ ປີກາເປົ້າ ເດືອນ ໓ ແຮມ ໑໑ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ  
 ໕ (ວັນພະຫັດ) ມື້ຮວຍຍີ້. Translation: In the Greater Era 1215, a *ka pao* year, the third lunar month, the eleventh day of the waning moon, the fifth day of the week (Thursday), a *hwai nyi* day.

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<sup>56</sup> For more details, see the colophons of the manuscripts nos. BAD-13-1-0004, BAD-13-1-0005, BAD-13-1-0007, BAD-13-1-0008, BAD-13-1-0009, BAD-13-1-0015, BAD-13-1-0019, BAD-13-1-0026, BAD-13-1-0074, BAD-13-1-0075, BAD-13-1-0114, BAD-13-1-0127, BAD-13-1-0149, BAD-13-1-0153, BAD-13-1-0156, BAD-13-1-0167, BAD-13-1-0215, BAD-13-1-0223, BAD-13-1-0229, BAD-13-1-0231, BAD-13-1-0234, BAD-13-1-0280, BAD-13-1-0313, BAD-13-1-0315, BAD-13-1-0309, BAD-13-1-0328, BAD-13-2-013, BAD-13-2-031, BAD-13-2-034, BAD-13-2-036, BAD-13-2-037, BAD-13-2-038.

<sup>57</sup> For more details about Minor and Greater Eras, see Chao Phetsarat 2001, pp. 34–42.

BAD-1-13-0281: ມະຫາສັງກາດລາຊາໄດ້ ໑໒໗໗ ຕົວ ປີຮັບເໝົ້າ ເດືອນ ໖ ແຮມ ຕູ ຄໍ່າ ວັນ  
໗ (ວັນເສົາ) ມື້ເມິງເໝົ້າ. Translation: In the Greater Era 1277, a *hap*  
*mao* year, the sixth lunar month, the eighth day of the waning  
moon, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), a *moeng pao* day.

If the eras of these colophons are right, the manuscripts have lasted several centuries. The first one would be 722 years old ( $[2015 - (1215 + 78)]$ ), whereas the other one would be 660 years old ( $[2015 - (1277 + 78)]$ ). Therefore, the first one would have been produced 60 years before the founding of the Kingdom of Lan Xang (1353), the last one only two years after the kingdom was founded. This is hardly reasonable because no concrete evidence supports the usage of palm-leaf as a writing material at that time. Moreover, Theravada Buddhism was first introduced into the kingdom only in 1359. Interestingly, the dates do not match with the year. However, if 1215 actually refers to a year of the Minor Era, it matches with AD 1854, February 23, Thursday. Therefore, the first manuscript has survived for over a hundred and sixty years ( $2015 - 1854 = 161$ ). This seems much more plausible. Similarly, if 1277 refers to the Minor Era then this equates to AD 1915, June 5, Saturday. In the case, the second manuscript is only a century old ( $2015 - 1915 = 100$ ).

Unlike the main text, which is copied from an older manuscript, the colophon is the personal creation of the scribe. The author of the colophon can use it to express his thoughts about the manuscript; only the name of the initiator(s) are fixed. Therefore, the contents of colophons are varied and may pose many questions. As Veidlinger (2006: 15) argues: “The fact that the colophons are in the vernacular in itself opens up a range of questions about the knowledge of the scribes, the intended users of texts, and the interplay between Pali and other languages.” This suggests that the person who wrote the colophon may not have had much in the way of real knowledge vis-à-vis Pali, to the extent that he may have just written some Pali words – or perhaps, rather, Lao words originating from Pali – according to his own memory and understanding.

#### b) Dating system

According to the tradition, the date of the manuscript includes the Year of the Animal, the lunar month, fortnight, day of the week, and Day of the Animal (Zodiac Day). There are sixty names describing the Year of the Animal and the year of the decade. Each name of the sexagesimal calendar is a combination of a *mae pi* (ແມ່ປີ), literally “mother of the year” and a *luk pi* (ລູກປີ), literally “child of the year”. The *mae pi* comprises ten names and the *luk pi* twelve names. The sixty names denoting the Years of the Animals in combination with the year of the decade are made of the *mae pi* (six rounds) and *luk pi* (five rounds),

they begin with the word *pi*, the name of the *mae pi* and followed by the name of the *luk pi*, respectively (see Table 2.3 below).

In general, each Year of the Animal consists of twelve lunar months, which are divided into two categories, odd-numbered months (ເດືອນຄຶກ) and even-numbered months (ເດືອນຄູ່). The name of each month begins with the word *düan* and is followed by its particular name. The first month is named by a word, *chiang* (first, one), the second one *nyi* (second, two), and the remaining months are named by numbers. Each odd-numbered month comprises 29 days, and each even-numbered months consists of 30 days. Therefore, one Year of the Animal has 354 days. In fact, to reconcile the lunar calendar with the solar year comprising 365 days, some years have an additional month added and, therefore, come to a total of thirteen months. The added month is the eighth month, a thirty-day month known to the Lao people as *paet sòng hon* (ແປດສອງຫົນ) (literally “double eight”). The first eighth month is called *düan paet ton* (ເດືອນແປດຕົ້ນ), whereas the second eighth month is referred to as *düan paet lun* (ເດືອນແປດລຸນ). According to Chao Phetsalat (2011: 13), ancient scholars drew up an extra year, a year comprising thirteen months, in order to match the Western calendar. The thirteen-month year occurs every two or three years depending on *dithi thaloen sok* (ດິຖິຖະເຫຼິງສິກ), or the day on which the New Year begins. The first day of a year with thirteen months lies between the fifth lunar month – the tenth day of the waning moon – and the sixth lunar month – the fifth day of the waxing moon.<sup>58</sup>

Each lunar month comprises two fortnights. The first fortnight - or the first half of the month – is called *düan khün* or *khün* (ເດືອນຂຶ້ນ/ຂຶ້ນ), which literally means the rising moon or the waxing moon; the second half of month is known as *düan haem* or *haem* (ເດືອນແຮມ/ແຮມ), translated as the waning moon. In practice, *düan khün* is always replaced with *khang khün* and *khang haem* for *düan haem*. In daily communication, only *khün* or *haem* are used whenever a certain day of a month is required. The word *kham* (ຄຳ) (evening; dark) is also necessitated to form a structure “*khün/haem – (day of a month) – kham*”, for instance, *khün paet kham* (the eighth day of the waxing moon) or *haem sip ha kham* (the fifteenth day of the waning moon). If the day of the month is one, the structure can be changed to “*khün/haem – kham – (one)*” such as *khün kham nüng* (the first day of the waxing moon), *haem kham nüng* (the first day of the waning moon). The first half of every month and the second half of evenly-numbered months contain fifteen days, whereas the second half of oddly-numbered months consist of fourteen days.

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<sup>58</sup> For more details about the Lao calendar, please see Chao Phetsarat 2001, pp. 1–18; and for the calendar of Southeast Asia in general see Eade (1995).

Days of the week are named by numbers, beginning with the word *van* (ວັນ) and followed by ordered cardinal numbers. The first day of the week is Sunday and the last one is Saturday. For instance, *van nūng*, *van sòng*, *van sam* – literally, Day One (the first day of the week), Day Two (the second day of the week), Day Three (the third day of the week) – corresponding to Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etcetra.

Days of the Animals or cyclic days comprise sixty days and are named in the same way as the Year of the Animals. The difference between them is the first word. The names of the Days of the Animals begin with the word *mü* (ມຸ້), whereas the year begins with *pi*.

Table 2.7: Cyclic years and days (The Years and the Days of the Animals)

Sixty names of the cyclic years and days										
<i>mae pi/mü</i> <i>luk pi/mü</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>chai</i> Rat	<i>hap</i> <i>pao</i> Ox	<i>hwai</i> <i>nyi</i> Tiger	<i>moeng</i> <i>mao</i> Rabbit	<i>poek</i> <i>si</i> Big Snake	<i>kat</i> <i>sai</i> Small Snake	<i>kot</i> <i>Sa-nga</i> Horse	<i>huang</i> <i>mot</i> Sheep	<i>tao</i> <i>san</i> Monkey	<i>ka</i> <i>hao</i> Cock
<i>mae pi/mü</i> <i>luk pi/mü</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>set</i> Dog	<i>hap</i> <i>khai</i> Pig	<i>hwai</i> <i>chai</i> Rat	<i>moeng</i> <i>pao</i> Ox	<i>poek</i> <i>nyi</i> Tiger	<i>kat</i> <i>mao</i> Rabbit	<i>kot</i> <i>si</i> Big Snake	<i>huang</i> <i>sai</i> Small Snake	<i>tao</i> <i>Sa-nga</i> Horse	<i>ka</i> <i>mot</i> Sheep
<i>mae pi/mü</i> <i>luk pi/mü</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>san</i> Monkey	<i>hap</i> <i>hao</i> Cock	<i>hwai</i> <i>set</i> Dog	<i>moeng</i> <i>khai</i> Pig	<i>poek</i> <i>chai</i> Rat	<i>kat</i> <i>pao</i> Ox	<i>kot</i> <i>nyi</i> Tiger	<i>huang</i> <i>mao</i> Rabbit	<i>tao</i> <i>si</i> Big Snake	<i>ka</i> <i>sai</i> Small Snake
<i>mae pi</i> <i>luk pi</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>Sa-nga</i> Horse	<i>hap</i> <i>mot</i> Sheep	<i>hwai</i> <i>san</i> Monkey	<i>moeng</i> <i>hao</i> Cock	<i>poek</i> <i>set</i> Dog	<i>kat</i> <i>khai</i> Pig	<i>kot</i> <i>chai</i> Rat	<i>huang</i> <i>pao</i> Ox	<i>tao</i> <i>nyi</i> Tiger	<i>ka</i> <i>mao</i> Rabbit
<i>mae pi/mü</i> <i>luk pi/mü</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>si</i> Big Snake	<i>hap</i> <i>sai</i> Small Snake	<i>hwai</i> <i>Sa-nga</i> Horse	<i>moeng</i> <i>mot</i> Sheep	<i>poek</i> <i>san</i> Monkey	<i>kat</i> <i>hao</i> Cock	<i>kot</i> <i>set</i> Dog	<i>huang</i> <i>khai</i> Pig	<i>tao</i> <i>chai</i> Rat	<i>ka</i> <i>pao</i> Ox
<i>mae pi/mü</i> <i>luk pi/mü</i> Animal	<i>kap</i> <i>nyi</i> Tiger	<i>hap</i> <i>mao</i> Rabbit	<i>hwai</i> <i>si</i> Big Snake	<i>moeng</i> <i>sai</i> Small Snake	<i>poek</i> <i>Sa-nga</i> Horse	<i>kat</i> <i>mot</i> Sheep	<i>kot</i> <i>san</i> Monkey	<i>huang</i> <i>hao</i> Cock	<i>tao</i> <i>set</i> Dog	<i>ka</i> <i>khai</i> Pig

*Developed from Chao Phetsarat (2011: 32–33), Translated from the Thai version by the Central Committee for Education of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization*

### c) Times of the day

Generally speaking, Lao people are accustomed to the time of the day by the term *kang ven* (ກາງເວັນ), day time, and *kang khün* (ກາງຄືນ), night time. Lao astrologists divide day and night times into eight periods and their names are quite similar. The name of each period begins with the word *nyam* (ຍາມ), literally time of the day, followed by its specific name (see Table 2.8 below).

Table 2.8: Times of the day

Day time			Night time		
Name	From	To	Name	From	To
<i>tut tang</i>	06:00 am	07:30 am	<i>tut tang</i>	18:00 pm	19:30 pm
<i>ngai</i>	07:30 am	09:00 am	<i>doek</i>	19:30 pm	21:00 pm
<i>thae kai thiang</i>	09:00 am	10:30 am	<i>thae kai thiang</i>	21:00 pm	22:30 pm
<i>thiang van</i>	10:30 am	12:00 am	<i>thiang khün</i>	22:30 pm	24: pm
<i>tut sai</i>	12:00 am	13:30 pm	<i>tut sai</i>	24:00 pm	01:30 am
<i>laeng</i>	13:30 pm	15:00 pm	<i>khua</i>	01:30 am	03:00 am
<i>thae kai kham</i>	15:00 pm	16:30 pm	<i>thae kai hung</i>	03:00 am	04:30 am
<i>phat lan</i>	16:30 pm	18:00 pm	<i>phat lan</i>	04:30 am	06:00 am

Developed from Chao Phetsarat (2011: 5), Translated from the Thai version by the Central Committee for Education of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization

For four of the names in this table – *ngai*, *laeng*, *doek*, and *khua* – the word *kòng* can be added between them and the word *nyam*. In other words, *nyam ngai* sometimes appears as *nyam kòng ngai*, *nyam laeng* as *nyam kòng laeng*, *nyam doek* as *nyam kòng doek*, and *nyam khua* as *nyam kòng khua*. Palm-leaf manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan with colophons containing the time of the day indicate that these were generally during the day. This is not unusual because copying manuscripts at night time could result in many mistakes due to the scarcity of ample light provided by a torch.

Nevertheless, some manuscripts retrieved from the domicile of Sathu Nyai Khamchan and written on modern paper during the early years of the twenty-first century were, indeed, completed at night time. Furthermore, the hour of completion which appears in their colophons is recorded according to a twenty-four hour clock. This is unsurprising given that these manuscripts were produced in the modern era through the application of modern practices, both technological and stylistic (see Chapter 5).

#### d) The objectives of manuscript-making

Generally speaking, there are numerous reasons for the copying and making of manuscripts. As Veidlinger (2006, 164) points out: “Various reasons are given in the colophons for making the manuscripts, such as the wish to make merit, to support the religion, and to achieve *nibbāna* in a future life.” Nevertheless, the continuation of Buddhism and the acquisition of obtain should be considered the two primary purposes for producing a manuscript. Numerous Lao Buddhists, both monks and laypeople – like a number of Buddhists in the other Theravada Buddhist countries in mainland Southeast Asia – believe that Buddhism would flourish for five thousand years after Lord Buddha

passed away in 543 BC. It is generally believed that one way to obtain merit is to contribute to the promotion of Buddhism by contributing to the process of manuscript making. Being confident in gaining merit from manuscript making, the donor asks that all of his/her wishes be fulfilled. In other words, merit-making is understood – by some devotees – as the continuous development of goodness/perfection until it is sufficient to gain enlightenment and reach *nibbāna*: the donors’ highest wish. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of colophons within the manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan – and likely in other Lao manuscripts – mention these two purposes.

Aside from these two reasons, some manuscripts were made in order to dedicate the donor’s acquired merits to a deceased person. Lao Buddhists believe that organizing a ceremony of merit-making in the name of the deceased is a way of showing gratitude to their benefactors. In general, a person who performs the act of merit-making and the deceased are usually relatives. Even many years after they have passed away, their children, relatives and other grateful people still take their goodness to heart and express their appreciation of the deceased with an act of making merit. This can be seen clearly at a village level. At the time a person dies, relatives and villagers voluntarily gather at the home of the deceased to arrange and participate in the “ceremony of the dead” (ພິທີປົງສິບ). This ritual is also recognized as merit-making. Tambiah (1970: 179) elucidates that, “Village mortuary rites not only state the change in status but are concerned to secure for the dead a good status by merit-making and transfer of merit. Participation in mortuary rites is itself defined as merit-making for the living.” A text of *Sòng Phao Phi* or *Anisong Phao Phi* (“Merit gained from organizing the ceremony of the dead”) was probably written to support this rite.

Colophons of other manuscripts kept in the same place also indicate that they were made for obtaining happiness and removing an evil or disease from the donor’s body. This may be understood that the donor would like to live happily in this life, more than to obtain happiness in the next life. One possibility is that a person who sponsored a manuscript had enough property to live in prosperity, but he/she might have had some problems with his/her health or fate. Therefore, he/she followed the traditional path to remove such maladies. Making manuscripts as an aid to remove bad luck or disease from one’s body is one example that illustrates the synthesis or convergence of Buddhist and native belief structures (see Chapter 4 for further discussion).

A number of the manuscripts in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s repository also clearly indicate that they were made for marking a specific event. Sathu Nyai Khamchan himself made numerous manuscripts to commemorate the anniversary of his birthday – indeed, at



least three times<sup>59</sup> – at the ages of 24, 36, and 56. Furthermore, most manuscripts produced for the commemoration of the “second cycle anniversary” of his birthday, when he was twenty-four years old, contain *Anisong* texts (see Chapter 3). His birthday ceremony, moreover, was sometimes organized by other senior monks and laypeople who were his close disciples (B2435/Box B23, BAD-12-2-1987.010). This is similar to other rituals where the “owners” of the ceremonies do not have to arrange or prepare anything.<sup>60</sup>

Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s acts of making merit via the production of manuscripts to commemorate his birthday were welcomed by laypeople as well. When they saw that a respected senior monk like Sathu Nyai Khamchan made manuscripts to commemorate his birthday, it is probable that laypeople also considered this a good way to make merit and, therefore, followed his example. Two manuscripts within the collection – BAD-1-13-0027 and BAD-1-13-0139 – contain passages stating that they were made to commemorate a layperson’s birthday.

e) The wishes of the manuscript initiator(s)

Most colophons of manuscripts, and especially their concluding remarks, express the initiator’s wish to eventually attain *nibbāna*; indeed, this is highest aspiration for the vast majority of Buddhist people who initiate the production of the manuscripts. Manuscript-making demands certain contributions from many people, notably scribes, sponsors, and donors. Interestingly, some of them might have the same specified wish, but they may differ in unspecified ones. The specified wish is, of course, to reach the same highest goal. It can be explicitly stated. However, their private, unspecified wishes expressed as “*khò hai dai dang kham mak kham pathana thuk yang thuk pakan thoen*” or “ຂໍໃຫ້ໄດ້ດັງຄໍາມັກຄໍາປາຖະໜາທຸກຢ່າງທຸກປະການເທີ້ນ” (“[I/we] wish all [my/our] wishes be fulfilled”) are not disclosed to other people.

The Lao Buddhist devotees understand that they will need to be reborn many times before achieving *nibbāna*. Therefore, it is natural that they would wish for their lives in every existence to be improved continuously, at least in this life. As such, they wish that their private requests are granted every time that they perform an act of merit-making. The initiator(s) who share their contributions to the production of manuscripts may wish in this context. The answers to the questions “How many wishes do they request? What are they?”

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<sup>59</sup> For more details see the colophons of the manuscripts nos. BAD-1-13-0120, BAD-1-13-0157, BAD-1-13-0163, BAD-1-13-0208, BAD-1-13-0230, BAD-1-13-0280; BAD-1-13-0222.

<sup>60</sup> For instance, the *basi* ceremony, where a sacred string is bound around the wrist for protection, or the *sia khò* ceremony for the removal of bad luck.

Why do they wish such wishes to be fulfilled? And why such wishes cannot be said out loud?” are far-reaching, indeed.

Table 2.9: Sample of the contents of two colophons

		BAD-13-1-0058	BAD-13-1-0296
Era		CS 1215	CS 1223
Lunar calendar	Year	<i>ka pao</i> (Year of the Ox)	<i>huang hao</i> (Year of the Cock)
	Month	3 <sup>th</sup> month	2 <sup>nd</sup> month of 8 <sup>th</sup> month
	Fortnight	11 <sup>th</sup> waning day	5 <sup>th</sup> waxing day
	Day of the week	<i>van ha</i> (Thursday)	<i>van hok</i> (Friday)
	Zodiac day	<i>hwai nyi</i>	<i>tao set</i>
	Corresponding to	AD 1854, February 23, Thursday	AD 1861, July 12, Friday
Time		<i>nyam kòng laeng</i> (01:30 – 03:00 pm)	<i>nyam kòng ngai</i> (07:30 – 09:00 am)
Initiator	Scribe	[Maha Buppha Pannya Phikkhu]	unknown
	Donor	A single donor, Maha Buppha Pannya Phikkhu.	A group of donors, Siang Pheng and his spouse, parents, children, and all relatives.
Title		<i>thutangkhatvat</i>	<i>paet mün</i>
Objective		to ensure the continuation of Buddhism over five thousand <i>vassa</i> (rains-retreats)	to ensure the continuation of Buddhism over five thousand years
Wish		all his wishes to be fulfilled.	their wishes to be fulfilled.
Concluding word (in Pali)		<i>Nibbāna paccayo ahaṃ buddho homi.</i>	<i>Nibbāna paccayo hotu no dhavaṃ dhavaṃ niccaṃ.</i>

As mentioned above, achieving *nibbāna* is the ultimate aim of merit-making, but this does not mean that sponsoring manuscripts and similar forms of merit making alone will directly lead a person to *nibbāna*. He/she may or may not reach his/her highest goal depending on various conditions and circumstances. However, by acquiring good merit, he/she may improve his/her life and be happy to follow the Buddha’s teachings in their day to day life. This, it is believed, will enable him/her to find the right way and, perhaps, eventually attain *nibbāna*. The final piece of the manuscript colophon, the concluding words, – whether in Lao *khò hai thoeng pha nipphan* ຂໍໃຫ້ເຖິງພະນົບພານ, or in Pali *nibbānapaccayo* or *nibbānapaccayo hotu* – are composed and passed on from one generation to the next in the same context.

### 3.7 Classification

The taxonomy of manuscripts varies depending on regulations and the aims of such classifications. In his chapter “Literature”, Phouvong demonstrates that in the sixteenth century Lao folklore was derived from Indian sources. Buddhist sermons and chants also flourished. These became a source of indirect influence for a great many popular tales and novels in both verse and prose. According to Phouvong (1959: 341):

on the whole it is the religious literature that is the richest. It contains the canonical texts and the extra-canonical works. Canonical literature is represented by the Buddhist canon (*Tipiṭaka*) which is composed of three collections: Speeches, Discipline and Dogmatics (*Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*).

Phouvong also classifies some texts as magical formulas, general instruction, and grammatical explanations. Many categories are mentioned in his work including Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma, Jataka, didactics, and philology. Phouvong further provides readers with two types of text compilations: prose and verse. The former was used for religious teaching, whereas the latter for everyday use.<sup>61</sup>

Some manuscripts, moreover, contain various or ambiguous texts which are difficult to be classified and placed in an appropriate category. In practice, numerous manuscripts contain various texts and relate to many subjects – such as astrology, medicine, and magic – which are complicated to deal with. Therefore, a suitable classification of manuscripts as such is multiple-text manuscript, that is, manuscripts are categorized by the numbers of their texts, not by the substances of their contents. Some scholars, such as McDaniel (2008: 109), classify manuscripts by recognizing their purposes and usage. McDaniel considers manuscripts containing *nissaya*, *vohāra* and *nāmasadda* texts as pedagogical manuscripts. Furthermore, he contends that,

These texts cannot be placed into neat categories. They must be seen as particular moments in a history of articulations of Buddhism. They do not describe Buddhist thought systematically. They do not clearly present a Buddhist episteme or commentarial tradition. Instead they evince the ways local agents were reaching back and reaching towards Buddhism.

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<sup>61</sup> For more details see Phouvong Phimmasone 1959, “Literature” in Berval de René (ed.) *Kingdom of Laos*, A. Bontemps Co., Ltd., Limoges, pp. 336–344.

However, in his article “Two Buddhist librarians: The proximate mechanisms of Northern Thai Buddhist history” McDaniel (2009: 131) seems to classify manuscripts according to the languages in which they were written.

Additionally, McDaniel reveals that the number of manuscripts in Northern Thailand written in a vernacular language is much greater than of those written in Pali. In fact, vernacular manuscripts are well known to local people because the contents of the manuscripts mostly deal with the people’s beliefs and daily activities. In other words, not only do people understand the contents, they can remember the titles of the manuscripts as well. McDaniel further posits that:

The rise in vernacular genres, the importance of the cities of Nan and Phrae in literary production, and the explosion of writing in the 1830s that has occupied scholars of Northern Thailand for the last 50 years cannot be understood without understanding developments in Lao literary practices. Vernacular manuscripts are in greater abundance and generally better known.

In the 1990s, the scholars of the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme (PLMP) divided thousands of texts – 86,000 texts written on 368,000 fascicles, of which about 12,337 texts are currently available for online research – into twenty categories.<sup>62</sup> Of these, the last two categories (miscellaneous and undetermined) are remarkable because they illustrate a peculiar feature of Lao manuscripts: specifically, that some manuscripts, both palm-leaf and paper manuscripts, contain various multiple texts. Over 400 manuscripts, 330 of which were written on palm leaves and 86 on paper, found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan are characterized by the same feature (see table 2.10 below).

Table 2.10: Numbers of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts in each category

Category	Palm leaf		Paper	
Vinaya (ພະວິໄນ)	8	2.4%	2	2.3%
Sutta (ພະສູດ)	37	11.2%	3	3.4%
Abhidhamma (ພະອະພິທໍາ)	3	0.9%	0	-
Chanting (ບົດສູດມົນ)	5	1.5%	0	-
General Buddhism (ທໍາມະທິວໄປ)	12	3.6%	0	-
Jataka (ຊາຕິກ)	70	21.2%	0	-
Buddhist tales (ນິຍາຍທໍາມະ)	4	1.2%	0	-
Sòng / Salòng / Anisong (ສອງ / ສະຫຼອງ / ອານິສົງ)	34	10.3%	23	26.7%

<sup>62</sup> For more details please visit <http://www.laomanuscripts.net>.

Didactics (ໂອວາດ/ຄຳສອນ)	4	1.2%	0	-
Buddhist chronicles (ຕຳນານພຸດທະສາສະໜາ)	33	10%	0	-
Secular history (ຕຳນານເມືອງ)	7	2.1%	0	-
Law (ກົດໝາຍ)	2	0.6%	0	-
Philology (ອັກສອນສາດ)	1	0.3%	1	1.1%
Medicine / Magic (ຢາພື້ນເມືອງ / ຄາຖາ)	9	2.7%	0	-
Custom / Ritual (ປະເພນີ / ພິທີກຳ)	11	3.3%	0	-
Secular literary works (ວັນນະຄະດີ)	8	2.4%	0	-
Astrology (ໂທລາສາດ)	1	0.3%	2	2.3%
Miscellaneous (ຫຼາຍໝວດ)	2	0.6%	30	34.1%
Undetermined <sup>63</sup> (ບໍ່ໄດ້ຈັດໝວດ)	79	23.9%	25	29.3%
Total	330		86	
			416	

Aside from undetermined manuscripts, this table shows that texts written on palm leave appear in every category, whereas only manuscripts of six categories are written on paper. Interestingly, of all texts written on palm-leaf, the number of Jataka texts is larger than that of others, whereas the smallest numbers of texts are from the categories of philology and astrology. This may indicate that Jataka stories are well-known to the Lao people of Luang Prabang, and of Laos as a whole. In addition, the title of the last Jataka story, Vessantara Jataka, gives its name to the annual festival in Laos, namely the Festival of Vessantara (Bun Phavet).

This may further suggest that palm leaves are still used to record religious and sacred texts. This supposition appears to be supported by the colophon of the manuscript no. BAD-13-1-0074, entitled Mahavibak hòm,<sup>64</sup> written in BE 2516 (AD 1973). The colophon reads:

ພະພຸດທະສັງກາດ ໒໕໑໖ ປີສະຫຼຸ ປີກາເປົ້າ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ແຮມ ໑໒ ຄຳ ກົງກັບວັນທີ ໒໔ ວັນພຸດ. ມູນລະ  
ສັດທາໝາຍ[ມີ] ນາຍພົນເຜີຍ ແລະສາວຈັນສຸກ ບ້ານ[...] ມີຈິດເຈຕະນາຈຶ່ງໄດ້ສະລະຊັບອອກໄປ  
ສ້າງທັງສີມະທາວິບາກຜູກນີ້ ໄວ້ສືບພະພຸດທະສາສະໜາພະໂຄຕະມະເຈົ້າ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ່າ ໕໐໐໐ ພະວັດ  
ສາ ເພື່ອໃຫ້ເປັນທີ່ສັກກາລະບູຊາແກ່ອຸບາສິກອຸບາສິກາທັງຫຼາຍສືບຕໍ່ ໒ ກັນໄປຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ່າສຸດເຊນໃບ

<sup>63</sup> The classification of “undetermined” is used for loose manuscripts whose texts are missing their beginning and concluding parts. Some leaves and sheets remain bound together as a *phuk* for palm leaves or as a *lem* for paper, but they are, nevertheless, incomplete manuscripts. For more details please see manuscripts nos. BAD-13-1-0066, BAD-13-1-0069, BAD-13-1-0071, BAD-13-1-0153, BAD-13-1-0175, BAD-13-1-0219, BAD-13-1-0200, BAD-13-1-0232, BAD-13-2-001, BAD-13-2-002, BAD-13-2-003, BAD-13-2-005, BAD-13-2-014, BAD-13-2-015.

<sup>64</sup> Mahavibak hòm is a combination of a word of Pali origin *mahāvīpāka* (a great consequence of one’s actions) and a Lao word, *hòm* (ຮອມ), meaning narrow. Therefore, this word should be interpreted as the equivalent of “The short summary of a great consequence of one’s action”.

ລາມ. ແມ່ນ[ວ່າ]ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າທັງຫຼາຍໄດ້ກະທຳກາຍະກຳ ວະຈິກຳ ມະໂນກຳ ແຕ່ຊາດກ່ອນ ຫຼືຊາດນີ້ກໍ  
ດີ ຂໍໃຫ້ຫາຍເສຍ ດ້ວຍເຕຊະທຳທີ່[ພວກ]ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າໄດ້ສ້າງມາແລ້ວນີ້ ຂໍຈົ່ງດົນບັນດານໃຫ້[ພວກ]  
ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າໄດ້ປະສົບເຖິງພະນົບພານແດ່ກໍຂ້າເທີ້ນ. ອີທັງ ທັມມະທານັງ ນິພພານະ ປັຈຈະໂຍ ໂທຕຸ ເມ.  
ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວແປດໂມງເຊົ້າ. ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ທິດເສົາ ແສນສຸກຂະ ບ້ານລາດພອກ ນ້ຳອູ ເປັນຜູ້  
ລິດຈະນາ ຂໍນາບຸນມາກ ໒ ດ້ວຍເທີ້ນ.

This translates as:

It was Buddhist era 2516, the Year of the Ox, a *ka pao* year, the eleventh lunar month, the twelfth day of the waning moon, corresponding to the twenty-fourth day, Wednesday [24 October 1973, which was, indeed, a Wednesday]. General Phoei and Miss Chansuk of Ban [...] were faithful [to Buddhism] heartily. [So we] donated our property to sponsor this manuscript of Mahavibak and gave it as alms to Buddhism, for the continuation of Gotama Buddha's teachings until [the end of] five thousand years and for the worship of all laypeople until the end of the palm-leaf era. [We] wish [our acquired merit] to remove [from our bodies] all bad deeds, which we had done in former lives and are doing in this life through [our] acts, words and thoughts. [We] wish the power of the merit to lead us to *nibbāna*. [I wished] this gift of Dhamma to be a condition to lead me to *nibbāna*. [This manuscript] was completed at 8 am. As a scribe, I, Thit Sao Saensukkha, [living] at Ban Latphòk (village), Nam U (river) asked [the sponsor of this manuscript to share] a field for cultivating merits [with me].

After subject to analysis, the colophon reveals a variety of information. First, the scribe copied this manuscript according to the sponsors' demands and he seems to have received a certain amount of remuneration because the colophon clearly states that the sponsors used their money for the production of this manuscript. This indicates that manuscripts were made not only because of the effort of the scribe, but also due to the demand of the sponsors, who most probably became the donors of that manuscript. The information denoting payment for production of the manuscript appears to be the work of the scribe who wrote the colophon, because some scribes will not mention this fact even though they may have received payment from a sponsor.

Second, the objectives of the sponsors are to ensure the continuation of the Buddha's teachings until the completion of 5000 years and to have laypeople worship this manuscript until the end of the duration of the palm leaves (both of latter of which, in particular, is open to many interpretations). In fact, the age of palm leaves depends on the condition of their storage; in essence, like other organic matter, palm leaves decompose in a variety of ways such as the presence of bacteria and fungi (Agrawal 1984: 39–40). Therefore, the donors do not seem to be referring to the duration of the palm leaves from

which the manuscript is made, rather, to palm leaves in general. The donors might have thought that palm leaves were a respectable vehicle to record the teachings of the Buddha. In short, they seem to follow the traditional belief that palm leaves are sacred objects and that the leaves would become more spiritual if they contained the Buddha's teachings and written in Dhamma script.

Third, the donors hope that the power of the merit acquired through the sponsorship of this manuscript will remove their past and present sins, which were/are created by their acts, words, and thoughts. Here, it is not their past and present immoralities that are highlighted, but rather the cause of their wrongdoings. Most Buddhist devotees believe that a person with incorrect thoughts will say negative words and act unfavourably. The donors might know this matter well, so they mention all of the reasons that make them sinful.

Nonetheless, all of the information in the colophon of this manuscript, except the name of the donors, appears to stem from the perceptions of the scribe. If the scribe was a former monk, it is likely that he had read many manuscripts and colophons; he might also have been familiar with the structure, format and layout of the manuscripts and colophons. As such, when he was asked to write the colophon, he may have done so according to his understanding of this process because the donors might not have known the complete content of the colophon. Lao people are usually proud when their names appear on manuscripts, spiritual objects, or objects used for religious purposes, because this certifies that they have contributed to the promotion of Buddhism.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Historically, it seems that Buddhism was introduced into Laos after other kinds of belief had taken root. Specifically, Buddhism was introduced to replace animist rituals, but it was never able to fulfil this goal. It is also probable that Brahmanism was introduced to Laos before Buddhism. As a new religion, propagators of Buddhism co-opted various aspects of animism and Brahmanism in order to help aid the dissemination of Buddhist teachings. As such, some Lao people who claim to be Buddhists might actually know more details regarding other kinds of belief structures.

According to the Lao chronicles, Buddhism was first introduced to Laos in the fourteenth century. Some stories pre-date this time, but traces of monastic architecture only date back to fifteenth century (Lorrillard 2003: 189). Lao people might be proud of being Buddhists, so local Buddhist scholars try to ensure that most of the customs and traditions of Laos are related to ancient Buddhist thought (Nhouy 1959g: 287). Therefore, it is not surprising that places and leading characters mentioned in numerous tales and legends relate to the former lives of the Buddha. It seems that local Buddhist scholars propagate the

fact that Buddhism is part of Lao society. Although monks, novices and nuns live in monasteries, they all come from their own families and, at the very least, they remain relatives. Some monks might contribute their whole lives to Buddhism, but their parents and relative still recognize the status quo before their ordination.

It seems that Buddhism has a major influence on the everyday life of the Lao people. Monks, novices and nuns, together with laypeople, live in the same villages (communities). Most villages have their own monasteries which are usually centrally located within the villages. Traditionally, monasteries not only serve as residences for monastic members, but also as educational centres for communities as well. Monks are recognized as educated people who serve as teachers responsible for the education for Lao youth. Somlith (1955: 76) explains that:

The bonzes [monks] were accepted as the sole repositories of all the forms of knowledge constituting the intellectual heritage of the people. [...] Therefore, they had very heavy responsibilities towards the young people of Laos, whom they encouraged to lead an active and regular life. Young bonzes and novices, after their morning and midday meals (their only two meal during the day), had to follow a very full programme of study.

Numerous kinds of knowledge have existed since ancient times within manuscripts. These were usually recorded and copied by monks, novices, or laypeople who lived as monastic members. Some manuscripts serve Lao Buddhists not only as sacred materials, but also as pedagogical documents. They have their own physical features (writing material), contents, and ways of compilation and copying. They are, of course, kept in religious buildings, namely the monastic libraries (*hò tai* ຫໍໄຕ). However, numerous manuscripts are also kept in other monastic buildings such as ordination halls (*sim* ສິມ), sermon halls (*hò chaek / sala hong tham* ຫໍແຈກ / ສາລາໂຮງທໍາ) and monks' abodes (*kuti / kadi / kut* ກຸຕິ / ກະດີ / ກຸດ - Pali: *kuṭi*). Some manuscripts – containing numerous contents dealing with various subjects – are kept for the personal use of senior monks and abbots up until the present day. The following two chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) will respectively discuss the knowledge relating to religious and non-religious subjects derived from the manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, Vat Saen Sukharam, Luang Prabang.



## Chapter 3

### Knowledge Related to Religious Subjects

This chapter discusses the religious manuscripts that were classified in Chapter 2 (Table 2.6). These manuscripts were categorised as: Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma, Chanting, General Buddhism, Jataka, Buddhist Tales, Anisong, and Buddhist Chronicles. In addition, Didactics, Custom and Ritual are to be analysed as religious manuscripts because most of these texts relate not only to the traditional way of life of the Lao, but also to their faith in Buddhism. This study, however, assigns priority to the Vinaya, Sutta, Chanting, Jataka, Anisong, and Buddhist Chronicle categories. This is because these manuscripts specify the regulations prescribed for monks, novices, and nuns, as well as providing advice for laypeople to follow. This chapter will discuss each of the categories in the order outlined above.

#### 1. Vinaya

##### 1.1 Overview

The Vinaya Pitaka (Pali: *vinaya piṭaka*), the “Book of Discipline”, is one part or division of the Buddha’s teachings contained in the Tipiṭaka (Three Baskets), the main component of the Pali canon in Theravada Buddhism (Ko Lay 1990: 1). According to Ko Lay (ibid): “The great division in which are incorporated injunctions and admonitions of the Buddha on mode of conduct, and restraints on both bodily and verbal action of bhikkhus and bhikkunis, which form rules of discipline for them, is called the Vinaya Piṭaka.” The Vinaya itself specifies the rules that monks need to follow in order to attain the perfection of religious life.

##### 1.2 Two examples

###### **Kammavaca (Pali: *kammavācā*)**

Generally speaking, the Kammavaca deals with the set of questions and answers which is used in an ordination ceremony. In this ceremony, an ordaining monk must answer several “yes or no” questions posed to him by a monk on his right during a chant called Pha Kammavachachan (ພະກຳມະວາຈາຈາມ) who faces another monk on the left called Pha

Anusavanachan (ພະອະນຸສະວະນາຈານ). Agrawal (1982: 16) has defined the *kammavācā* as “a collection of extracts from the Pali *vinaya*, the monastic code of disciplines, outlining rituals and observances of Buddhist order, principally concerned with ordination and bestowals of robes.”

There are numerous variations of the Kammavaca; nine versions were collected and examined for this study: Vinai Sap Kammavaca (BAD-13-1-0293) (A), Pae Kammavaca (BAD-13-1-0320) (B), Yatti Kammavaca (BAD-13-2-018) (C), Kammavaca 17 Khan (BAD-13-2-019) (D), 19 Khan Kammavaca (BAD-13-2-020) (E), Sap Kammavaca (unlisted-VSS060(187)) (F), belonging to Vat Saen, Kammavaca (unlisted-VXT163 (G), VXT066(281) (H), VXT099(314) (I), belonging to Vat Xiang Thòng. Versions A, B, F, G, H and I are written on palm-leaf and composed bilingually in the Tham-Lao script. In essence, these are word-for-word translations from Pali into Lao. C differs from the other versions in that it is written in yellow ink on black paper in the Tham-Lan Na script, a monolingual Pali text. Versions D and E are written on modern industrially produced paper in the Burmese script in Pali. Aside from this, however, a comparison of the similarities and differences of these manuscripts is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the monks’ knowledge of Pali and their careful attention to the preservation of manuscripts, reflected clearly by the ongoing existence of these manuscripts, is examined.

Six versions explored here were copied as bilingual texts. In other words, these texts were composed by writing the text in Pali and then translating it into Lao according to the syntax of Pali. Both nouns and verbs in Pali are made with their own inflections. When they have to be translated into Lao, the “connector” – functioning as both a preposition and a conjunction – is inserted into the text. However, such a text would not be intelligible to Lao people who cannot read Pali. For instance, (A):

... *ācariyena bhikkhunā* (ອັນພິກຂຸຕິນເປັນອາຈານ a monk as a teacher) *pucchi* (ກໍຖາມ asks) *nāgam* (ຍັງນາກ *nak* (ordaining monk) *vacanena* (ດ້ວຍຄຳວ່າ with word [a question]) ...”, which means “a *kammavācā-ācariya*, a monk on the right side during a chant, asks the *nāga*, the ordaining monk, whether ...

If one were to ignore the Pali and read only the Lao, then the Lao sentence would be “ອັນພິກຂຸຕິນເປັນອາຈານກໍຖາມຍັງນາກດ້ວຍຄຳວ່າ...”, which would sound somewhat strange to most Lao people, especially those not familiar with Buddhist teachings. The sentence therefore has to be polished and rephrased as “ພິກຂຸຕິນທີ່ເປັນອາຈານກໍຖາມນາກວ່າ...” in order to make its syntax more familiar to modern Lao so that it can be remembered and used in everyday settings.

However, this text appears to have been and still is a means of teaching and learning Pali within the Lao Buddhist tradition. At the very least, a small number of monks who participated in many ordination ceremonies would hear the Pali phrases chanted in the ceremonies often enough to recite them on their own later on. Then, those who are interested in Pali – being eager to know the meaning of the words – must try to find a way to decipher the chants, which is commonly done by reading the Kammavaca text written in a bilingual format. Even today, some monks who live in monasteries in villages and small towns still learn Pali words from various kinds of bilingual Pali-Lao texts.

The Kammavaca text is preserved on both palm-leaf manuscripts and paper manuscripts in concertina form. These two types of manuscripts are transmitted from one generation to the next. In other words, senior monks, who are concerned about the ongoing survival and spread of Buddhism, pay much more attention to the Pali texts used to chant in the ordination ceremony than to the materials which are used to record these. Traditionally, Buddhist texts in Laos have been written on various types of palm leaves, while paper manuscripts made in the shape of *samut khòì* (a folding book in a concertina form) are less common in Laos. This type of manuscript has probably been influenced by those of neighbouring countries. Agrawal (1982: 67) notes that: “Paper manuscripts of this folding concertina form are common to both Thailand and Burma. They served as the basic book form for both specialized texts and for every utility use. Texts were prepared of literature, history and technical treatises, including the applied and performing arts.”

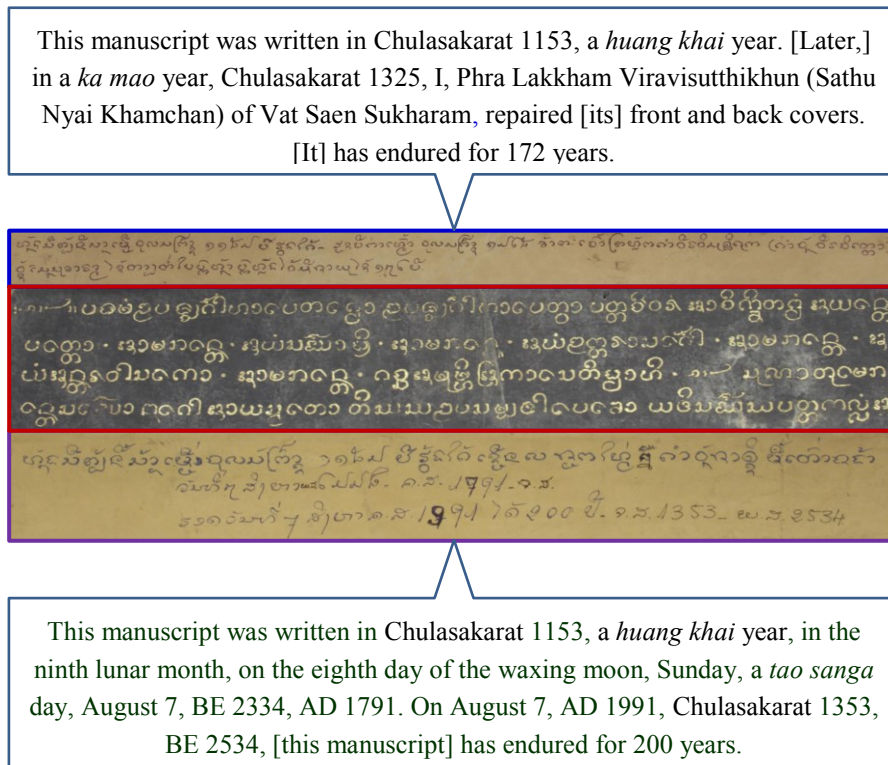
It is not surprising that three versions of Kammavaca in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s collection of manuscripts – Yatti Kammavaca (BAD-13-2-018) (C), Kammavaca 17 Khan (BAD-13-2-019) (D), 19 Khan Kammavaca (BAD-13-2-020) (E) – were not written on palm-leaf, but on paper in leporello formats and were written in foreign scripts, not in the Tham-Lao script. Version C was written in the Tham-Lan Na script, whereas Version E and Version D were written in the Burmese script. This indicates that Lao Buddhists have long associated with Buddhists in neighbouring countries. To enhance their relationships, they may have gone to visit each other and exchange opinions about Buddhist teachings, or sometimes exchange letters. Due to this fluidity between cultures, numerous monks and novices in these countries are able to read Buddhist texts written in many types of scripts correctly and fluently. Some of them are able to write in these foreign scripts as well.

The usage of the Tham-Lan Na script in Version C also indicates that the scribe might have tried to purify the texts in Pali arrived from Chiang Mai, at that time the capital of the Lan Na Kingdom, in the early sixteenth century to Lan Xang. We are able to draw this conclusion because this manuscript was written about two and a half centuries after the Lao Buddhists of the Lan Xang kingdom received a number of Buddhist texts from Chiang Mai in AD 1523 (Maha Sila, 2001: 63). From this year onwards, there were a number of

Buddhist scholars possessing knowledge of texts written in Pali and proficient in the Tham-Lan Na script, who became engaged with the production of manuscripts related to Buddhist teachings.

In AD 1963, 172 years after Version C was written – either in Lan Xang or Lan Na – its front and back cover was repaired with a note attached to it by a senior monk of Luang Prabang, namely Sathu Nyai Khamchan.<sup>65</sup> Even though we do not know his intentions for doing this, the note provides us with very important information regarding his opinions about the Buddhist tradition of ordination of Luang Prabang. This is especially case regarding the text used to chant in an ordination ceremony that is written in the manuscript of Yatti Kammavaca. In AD 1991, or twenty-eight years after he had repaired the manuscript, he also noted and confirmed that this manuscript was written in AD 1791 and had endured 200 years from the year of its creation.

Figure 3.1: Manuscript restoration

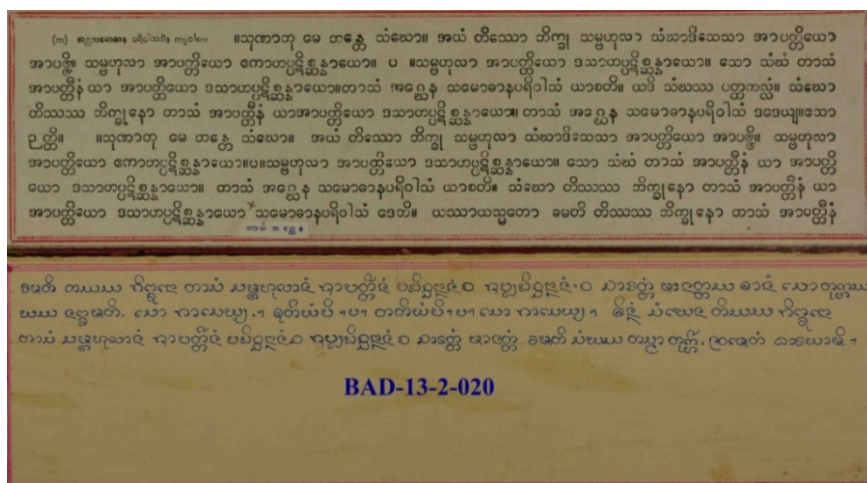


<sup>65</sup> Sathu Nyai Khamchan (1920–2007) was elected as the Head of the Sangha of the province of Luang Prabang in 1954 and maintained this position until his death in 2007. He was one of the senior monks in Luan Prabang who paid close attention to the *sangha* community. He collected various types of manuscripts and Buddhist objects, and he was a strong supporter of monastic education. Not only did he collect a great number of objects, but he was recognized as the scribe of a variety of palm-leaf manuscripts.

The information mentioned above indicates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan intended to keep this manuscript in good condition so that it would survive long periods of sustained usage. In other words, the manuscript can undoubtedly be identified as a work intended for his own private use. It remained in his possession for almost half a century, from the time he restored it to the time of his death (1963–2007). In fact, the manuscript might have become his property even earlier than this. It may have still been in good condition at first, but over time its cover became torn. Recognizing that this manuscript was of considerable importance to Buddhism, he repaired both the front and the back cover of this favourite manuscript and left a variety of intriguing notes inside the cover.

Version E and Version D are two additional manuscripts that clearly demonstrate the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang’s knowledge of foreign scripts. Both manuscripts are written in the Burmese script – a strong influence on both the Tham-Lan Na and Tham-Lao scripts (Maha Sila 1973: 14–15) – and in Pali. Their primary contents are similar to those of the first three versions. However, Version E should be considered exemplary of the abilities of monks of Luang Prabang to read and revise the Kammavaca text written in the foreign script of Burmese.

Figure 3.2: Text in Myanmar (Burmese) and Tham-Lao scripts (Version E)



This Pali text was written in the Burmese script detailing a set of questions and answers used in the ordination ceremony. The Buddhist monastic orders in all of the countries dominated by Theravada Buddhism use the same text for this ceremony. Any senior monk who, like Sathu Nyai Khamchan, has presided over such a ceremony, would surely know this text well. Therefore, the abbot was able to identify places where the text was incomplete and then add in his revisions using the Tham-Lao script, in contrast to the Burmese original. From this, we can draw the conclusion that, at least at this time in

history, both Burmese and Tham-Lao scripts were considered appropriate mediums by which to convey Pali texts, the sacred language used for representing what is believed to be the word of the Buddha.

It seems indeed that the missing part of Kammavaca was rewritten and then inserted into the original text by Sathu Nyai Khamchan, indicating that he most likely knew the text well enough to recite it orally. From what we know about him, he was one of the senior monks of Luang Prabang who loved to revise Buddhist texts. In the case of this particular text, we can say that it was written in the Burmese script, and in Pali. This indicates that he not just familiar with the Pali text itself but, rather, Sathu Nyai Khamchan was also capable of following the text well enough to recognize its shortcomings. The use of the blue ink ballpoint pen to rewrite the missing part of this book may have been in order to highlight the contrast between the two texts and make the differences clear to the reader.

### **Patimokkha (Pali: *pāṭimokkha*)**

The Patimokkha (Pali: *pāṭimokkha*) contains the institutional regulations of the *vinaya* that all monks are supposed to follow (BAD-13-2-066). In brief, it is a set of 227 rules that governs the daily activities of monks. No concrete evidence documents the exact date on which the rules were established, but it seems almost certain that all of them were collected at the first Great Buddhist Council in the year following the passing away of the Buddha. Buddhaghosa (1962: 12) explains that:

Then having classified accordingly these four Pārājika [Rules entailing expulsion from the Sangha] entitled the chapter on the Pārājika, ... they established the thirteen Saṅghādisesa [Rules entailing an initial and subsequent meeting of the Sangha]. They established the two rules called the Aniyata [Indefinite rules], the thirty rules called the Nissaggi-pācittiya [Rules entailing forfeiture and confession], the ninety-two rules called the Pācittiya [Rules entailing confession], the four rules called the Pāṭidesanīya [Rules entailing acknowledgement], the seventy-five rules called the Sekhiya [Rules of training], and [Adhikarana-Samatha,] the seven rules for the settlement of questions that have arisen.

Although the details of the Patimokkha are not the focus of this study, some of these should be examined briefly for putting them into proper context. The two hundred and twenty seven rules – broken down into eight groups as mentioned above – are supposed to be followed by the members of the Buddhist Sangha. In other words, the rules were established to regulate the behaviour of the Buddhist monks, whether it be personal

behaviour or behaviour towards other monks and laypeople respectively. The first chapter, or the Four Rules of Pārajika, lists the most serious offences; a monk breaking any of these shall be forced to disrobe and expelled from the monkhood. Apart from the Pārajika, if a monk breaks another rule, he will not lose his status as a *pha*, or, more precisely, *phikkhu* (Pali: *bhikkhu*), but he will be identified as a *pha thusin* (ພະທຸສິນ) (Pali: *dusīla bhikkhu*), or a monk of poor conduct. To become a virtuous monk again, he must go through a process of penalty and reinstatement, which usually just entails a temporary suspension.

Throughout Theravada countries, including the town of Luang Prabang in Laos, the Patimokkha is recited during the *uposot* (Pali: *uposatha*) assemblies held every two weeks. These assemblies typically convene on the fifteenth waxing day of the lunar month, and on the last day – the fourteenth or fifteenth waning day – of the lunar month. On such religious days, monks living in different monasteries, usually close to one another in location, are required to gather in a *sim* (Pali: *sīmā*), or ordination hall of an particular monastery to hold an *uposatha* service.

On these *uposot* days, both monks and laypeople are required to perform their religious duties. The monks assemble to listen to the text of the Patimokkha which I recited by the monk who is most knowledgeable about the text. As such, senior monks are typically asked to carry out this performance. In addition, on these days, devout laypeople often choose to observe the eight precepts. The first five precepts, which are to be followed by all laypeople of the Buddhist faith, are to refrain from: harming living things, taking that which is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicating substances. The three remaining precepts are to abstain from eating at forbidden times (ineffect, after noon); to abstain from singing, dancing, playing music, attending entertainment performances, wearing perfume, and using cosmetics and garlands; and to abstain from sitting or sleeping on luxurious surfaces.

Eight versions of the Patimokkha that were found will be presented in this study: Phikkhu Patimokkha (Pali: *bhikkhu pāṭimokkha*), BAD-13-1-0280 (A), BAD-13-2-066 (B) and one fascicle which is not listed Sap Patimokkha (Pali: *pāṭimokkha - sadda*) (unlisted-VSS014(077)) (C), belonging to Vat Saen, and (unlisted-VXT159) (D), (unlisted-VXT159(374)) (E), Pha Patimokkha (unlisted-VXT077(292)) (F), Patimokkha (unlisted-VXT087) (G), and (unlisted-VXT156) (H), belonging to Vat Xiang Thòng.

All of these versions are written in the Tham-Lao script. However, Versions A, B and F are monolingual, containing only Pali, whereas the other versions are bilingual, at least insofar as they contain bilingual additions or insertions. Not only do these versions suggest that the compilers' were proficient in applying Pali and Lao languages to the practice of manuscript-making, but they also demonstrate that the writers possessed

philological knowledge. Apart from Version B, which is in concertina form and written on industrial produced modern paper (which, in turn, allowed for numerous reproductions), all of these manuscripts were written on palm-leaf.

Manuscript BAD-13-1-0280, which contains Version A of the Patimokkha text, comprises two texts/stories, the Phikkhu Patimokkha (A1) and the process for an ordination (A2), meaning it is a multi-text manuscript. Even though some of contents reference one another, these texts contain some striking differences. See the table below:

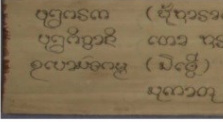
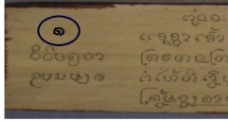
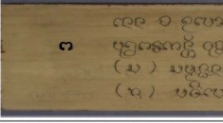
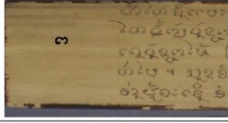
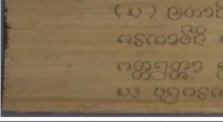
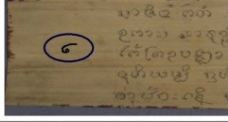
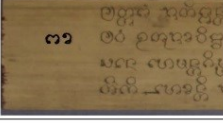
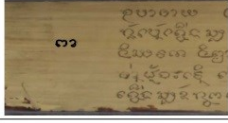
Table 3.1: Some differences between (A1) and (A2)

	(A1)	(A2)
Title	Buddhist monastic code	The process of ordination
Text	Pali	Mostly, <i>nissaya text</i>
Pagination	One system: Sanskrit orthography	Two systems: Sanskrit orthography and cardinal numbers
Date	BE 2499 (AD 1956)	BE 2490 (AD 1947)
Scribe	Sathu Phò Phan Phothipannyo	Sathu Nyai Khamchan
Donor	Sathu Nyai Khamchan	Sathu Nyai Khamchan
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To mark the celebration of his 36th birthday;</li> <li>- To dedicate merit to Sathu Nyai Kaenchan and his senior relatives.</li> </ul>	To support Buddhism.

According to this table, the texts of A1 and A2 were donated by the same person, Sathu Nyai Khamchan. This may be one reason – that is, that both A1 and A2 probably belonged to him – that they were threaded together as one fascicle of the same palm-leaf manuscript. One detail signifying that A1 and A2 were copied as two separate fascicles is that both of them begin with ‘1’ for their pagination, instead of using a continuous numbering system throughout the multi-text manuscript. However, the size of the palm leaves used as the supports for these texts are identical. Even though A1 and A2 were copied nine years apart from one another, the contents are similar in that they both pertain to the monastic discipline. Therefore, the combination of these as one single fascicle can be viewed as a collection of the regulations for the Sangha community. This suggests that the collector had the utility of this manuscript in mind and, therefore, felt it necessary to preserve this fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript containing two texts – one in Pali and the other in the vernacular language.



Table 3.2: The left margins of the first two pages of A1 and A2

	A1		A2
No pagination		The numeration – according to cardinal number – was recorded on the left margin of the first page of the first leaf. The number of the Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙) ‘one’ was applied.	
The numeration – according to Sanskrit orthography – was recorded on the left margin of the second page of the first leaf. The Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙ + 𑖀 = ⊙) was applied.		The numeration – according to Sanskrit orthography – was recorded on the left margin of the second page of the first leaf. The Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙ + 𑖀 = ⊙) was applied.	
No pagination		The numeration – according to cardinal number – was recorded on the left margin of the first page of the second leaf. The number of the Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙) ‘two’ was applied.	
The numeration – according to Sanskrit orthography – was recorded on the left margin of the second page of the second leaf. The Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙ + 𑖀 = ⊙) was applied.		The numeration – according to Sanskrit orthography – was recorded on the left margin of the second page of the second leaf. The Dhamma script of the Lao (⊙ + 𑖀 = ⊙) was applied.	

From the table, the difference between the pagination in A1 and A2 is remarkable. Traditionally, the fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript comprising less than fifty palm leaves is numerated according to one system of pagination and, in most cases, Sanskrit orthography is applied. This is true for A1, but it is not the case for A2. The scribe of A2 may have thought that numbers would be more convenient for readers lacking experience in Sanskrit orthography to understand. This usage of cardinal numbers, however, results in the reader being unable to determine whether or not the leaves are in proper order. However, the use of two different schemata for paginations may reflect the scribe’s intention to some extent, as perhaps he hoped to teach Sanskrit orthography to the reader by pairing the Sanskrit letters in A1 with the numbers in A2, such as 1 – *ka*, 2 – *kā*, 3 – *ki*, etc. Anyone who learns to read this manuscript, or any palm-leaf manuscript with dual pagination as discussed here, will indirectly start to become familiar with Sanskrit orthography. In addition, the pagination of A2 may have been influenced by the pagination of various types of modern publications to which the scribe might have had access at that time<sup>66</sup> (see the pagination of palm-leaf manuscripts in Chapter 2).

<sup>66</sup> Apside from the various types of manuscripts, a great number of printed materials, especially books and magazines, was found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode after his death. For instance, printed material nos. BAD-01.0009, BAD-01.0019, BAD-01.0113, BAD-01.0123; BAD-02.0101, BAD-02.0102, BAD-02.0103, BAD-02.0231, BAD-02.0240, BAD-02.0204, BAD-02.0205, BAD-02.0232, BAD-02.0244, BAD-02.0378, BAD-02.0390, BAD-02.0393, BAD-02.0447, BAD-02.0448, BAD-02.0468, BAD-02.0469, BAD-02.0475; BAD-03.0001; BAD-04.0060, BAD-04.0071; BAD-05.0001, BAD-05.0026, BAD-05.0027; BAD-06.0002, BAD-06.0003, BAD-06.0004, etc.

This fascicle is a striking example of how modern techniques can be applied to the process of writing/copying manuscripts. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, there are two systems for the pagination of palm-leaf manuscript, one using Sanskrit orthography and the other using ordered cardinal numbers. Here, two main characteristics of the traditional pagination of the palm-leaf manuscripts shall be identified: 1) pagination is recorded in the left-hand margin of the second page; and 2) if both two systems are used on the same page, then the Sanskrit alphabet is usually written above the number. The pagination of A2 does not follow this rule because the number appears in the left-hand margin of the first page. This indicates that the scribe might have intended to make some features of the palm-leaf manuscript similar to those of modern publications which were introduced into Laos in the early 1900s, even if texts and their formats in term of pagination are not static (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of this).

The table further indicates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan made this fascicle in order to memorialize a specific event in his life, namely his completion of three animal cycles, and to dedicate the merit received thereby to his predecessor, Sathu Nyai Kaenchan.<sup>67</sup> The colophon of this fascicle states that this event took place in BE 2489 (AD 1946). It seems that the laypeople of Luang Prabang followed Sathu Nyai Khamchan's example of making merit by producing (or sponsoring) manuscripts. This assumption is based on the large number of manuscripts found in his abode with colophons in which reference to this practice is made<sup>68</sup>, and which were made in honour of deceased teachers and/or loved ones. While the merit itself is made in the name of the deceased, the recipients of this merit are those loved ones close to the manuscript maker who are still alive, as well as the creator of the manuscript himself or herself.

Version B, or manuscript BAD-13-2-066, also reveals some interesting information. Apart from the main text of the Patimokkha, two ritual texts – the Pavaranakam and the Kammavaca of the Kathin robe ceremony – were added to this version of the text. The former text (Pali: *pavāraṇā - kamma*) is a religious ceremony organized on the last day of the Buddhist Lent on which all monks in a given monastery assemble in order to perform a religious ceremony, or *sanghakkamma* (literally: a formal act of the Buddhist Sangha). During this ceremony, the monks are given the opportunity to warn or criticize the

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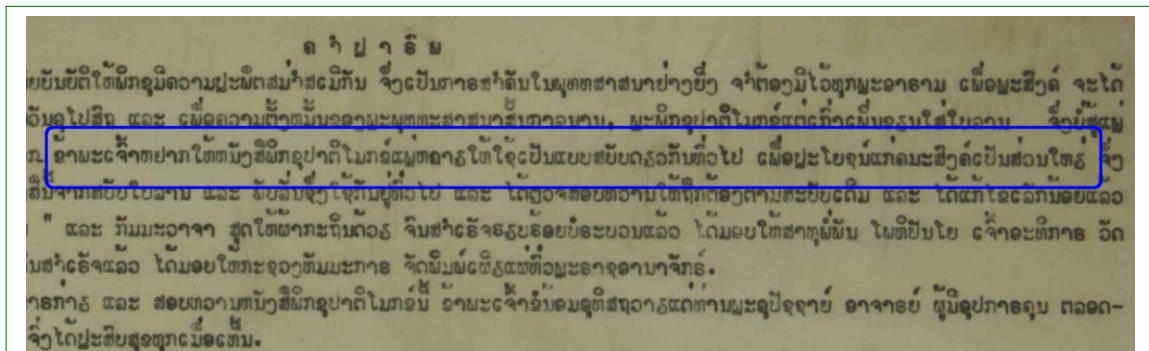
<sup>67</sup> Sathu Nyai Kaenchan (1892–1943), the preceptor and spiritual master of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, was a former abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam. Sathu Nyai Khamchan, who had been invited to reside in the monastery after his predecessor's passing, was appointed to the position of abbot in 1949.

<sup>68</sup> For more details, see BAD-13-1-0024, BAD-13-1-0090, BAD-13-1-0095, BAD-13-1-0096, BAD-13-1-0102, BAD-13-1-0106, BAD-13-1-0193, BAD-13-1-0195, BAD-13-1-0217, BAD-13-1-0263, BAD-13-1-0281, BAD-13-1-0297, BAD-13-1-0299, BAD-13-1-0310, BAD-13-1-0318, BAD-13-1-0319, BAD-13-1-0322.

wrongdoings of one another that have been witnessed, discussed, or speculated upon. The latter text within Version B is a Pali text chanted during Kathin festivals,<sup>69</sup> which are held in the month following Buddhist Lent.

The above-mentioned Patimokkha text is important to monks, and especially so for senior monks. The aim of this manuscript was to provide the Sangha throughout the country with a standardized version of the Patimokkha which could be used in a uniform fashion. The two added texts was to be strictly adhered to in the same way as the Patimokkha text. This suggests that the compiler had experience with a variety of religious texts and was familiar with their misrepresentation in various situations. In response, the scribe took two texts which he viewed as important and beneficial to the Sangha community and intergrated them as an appendix to the manuscript of the Patimokkha.

Figure 3.3: Excerpt from the introduction to the compilation of the Patimokkha text



Translation: I hope to have this version of the Phikkhu Patimokkha distributed and used for the benefit of the [Lao] Buddhist Sangha.

This manuscript was also made in concertina form and employs many of the modern techniques used for the publication of printed books. Many types of punctuation, such as commas, question marks, parentheses, paragraph breaks, aomng, can be found consistently throughout the manuscript. In addition, a number of various short explanations in parentheses were inserted into the main text. The manuscript also includes a preface in the Lao language using the modern Lao script written by the Minister of the Interior and

<sup>69</sup> At this time, lay people, who gather in processions to their local monastery, offer the sangha community the robes for the new season. Then, the Sangha decide who is to receive the robes, after which two monks are presented with these robes on the behalf of the whole Sangha. Later on, these monks will announce the monk who will receive the cloth, or Kathina's robe. This festival can only be held between the first waning day of the eleventh lunar moth and the fifteenth waning day of the twelfth lunar month.

Religious Affairs at that time (dated 22 September 1959). On the inside of the back cover, further remarks can be found, also written in Lao, written by the compiler, Sathu Nyai Khamchan, who was the Ecclesiastical Minister of the Luang Prabang Sangha at the time. This is dated 22 September 2504 (1961), just two years after the manuscript was produced.

Thus, we can see that the compiler used the specific date/time – the same as that in the preface of the manuscript – to date his own remarks. However, he did not use the Christian Era as in the preface, instead preferring the Buddhist Era. He seems to have applied a method reminiscent of the traditional way of dating palm-leaf manuscripts, which contains dates either in the Minor Era (Chulasakarat) or the Buddhist Era. The compiler likely chose to date the text in such a manner in order to distinguish religious texts and monastic documents from secular ones. A number of monastic documents from the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang, as well as the the rest of Laos, that were copied or created between the 1950s to the 1990s specify the year of creation in the Buddhist Era.<sup>70</sup>

## 2. Suttanta

### 2.1 Overview

A Suttanta (Pali: *suttana*) is a collection of all of the discourses delivered by the Buddha. It is also one part or division of the Buddha's teachings contained in the Tipiṭaka (literally: Three Baskets). As Ko Lay (1990: 1) notes:

The general discourses and sermons intended for both bhikkhus and lay disciples, delivered by the Buddha on various occasions (together with a few discourses delivered by some of his distinguished disciples), are collected and classified in a great division known as the Suttanta Piṭaka.

With regard to Ko Lay's explanation, the Suttanta Pitaka is divided into five separate collections, which are commonly known as Nikāyas; these are the Dīga Nikāya (Long

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<sup>70</sup> Not only are the monastic documents dated according to the Buddhist Era, they also follow the Christian Era as well. Furthermore, some of them combine the usage of both. For examples of this, see BAD-12-2-1952.008, BAD-12-2-1954.045, BAD-12-2-1955.136, BAD-12-2-1956.005, BAD-12-2-1957.015, BAD-12-2-1958.005, BAD-12-2-1959.048, BAD-12-2-1960.215, BAD-12-2-1961.001, BAD-12-2-1961.035, BAD-12-2-1962.008, BAD-12-2-1963.043, BAD-12-2-1964.040, BAD-12-2-1965.009, BAD-12-2-1966.026, BAD-12-2-1967.100, BAD-12-2-1968.002, BAD-12-2-1970.001, BAD-12-2-1971.019, BAD-12-2-1972.001, BAD-12-2-1976.006, BAD-12-2-1978.004, BAD-12-2-1978.005, BAD-12-2-1991.010, BAD-12-2-1992.001, BAD-12-2-1993.035, BAD-12-2-1994.021, BAD-12-2-1995.021, BAD-12-2-1996.014, BAD-12-2-1997.011, BAD-12-2-1998.001, BAD-12-2-1999.019.

Discourse), Majjhima Nikāya (Medium Length Discourse), Saṃyutta Nikāya (Connected Discourse), Aṅguttara Nikāya (Numerical Discourse), and Khuddaka Nikāya (Minor Discourse).<sup>71</sup>

## 2.2 Two examples

### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0089

This manuscript is entitled Akaravattasut (ອາກາລະວັດຕະສູດ), a variation of the Pali word *ākāravatta sutta* (one of the texts for recitation in a ritual ceremony organized for peace and prosperity), and is dated Chulasakarat 1282 (AD 1920). The manuscript comprises 35 palm leaves measuring 57.3 cm in length and 4.4 cm in width. Three of the leaves have been left blank. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines on each page, and its pagination follows the alphabetical system of Sanskrit.

The manuscript begins with five pages and two lines of texts composed in Pali, which is then followed by a text in the Lao language. The text tells a story from the life of the Buddha. It refers to an episode when the Buddha preached the Dhamma to monks and defined the meaning of kamma (Sanskrit: *karma*) as the result of one's accumulated merits and sins. At the same time, the text also mentions that all desires of anyone making, sponsoring, listening, chanting, or worshipping the text of the Akaravattasut would be fulfilled. Therefore, some laypeople understand that palm-leaf manuscripts containing texts in Pali are sacred objects. Some people even believe that such texts can protect them from various unexpected calamities.

Based on an understanding that merit can be gained by worshipping manuscripts, some laypeople keep manuscripts in their possession to bring good fortune and merit. These manuscripts are usually wrapped in a piece of cloth and placed on altars in their houses. The owners make offerings on a platter, usually containing two flowers, in order to pay homage to their manuscripts on the Buddhist Sabbath (*van sin* ວັນສິນ). While both men and women, young and old, can gather the objects for the platter, only a man is considered worthy of placing it on the altar. A number of traditional prohibitions were created according to this belief, thus women and children are traditionally forbidden from handling auspicious objects.

The Lao word used to indicate the creation or production of a manuscript is *sang* (ສ້າງ), which means “to make, sponsor, donate, write, and initiate”, depending on the context. However, the person who wrote or copied this manuscript inserted one more

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<sup>71</sup> For more details on the definition of Suttanta, please see Ko Lay 1990, p. 19.

word, *chang* (ຈ້າງ), to describe this activity. He must have had experience in selecting words for written material, otherwise he would not have known to use such a word in such a specific context. An excerpt of the text explaining the merit gained by producing this manuscript reads, “ອັນນີ້ກໍດ້ວຍອານຸພາບອັນໄດ້ສ້າງ, ໄດ້ຈ້າງທ່ານທັງຫຼາຍຂຽນ ແລະໄດ້ຟັງຍັງທໍາມະເຈົ້າດວງນີ້”, meaning “This [merit was created] by the supernatural power of having made [the manuscript], having paid other people to write, and having listened to this sermon.” This passage indicates that the scribe of this manuscript tried to propagate Buddhism by asking Buddhists to make donations for the copying of manuscripts so that the number of extant Buddhist manuscripts would increase. He may have believed that the higher the number of Buddhist manuscripts in existence, the greater the strength of the religion itself.

Manuscript BAD-13-1-0089 has a colophon with some points, such as the desires of the donor and the concluding remarks, which differ from those discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, the colophon seems to have been written after the text itself was finished, as the handwriting, script size, and incision darkness differ from the main text. The colophon reads:

ຈຸນລະ[ສັງ]ກາດ ໑໒໕໒ ຕົວປີ[...] ເດືອນ ໔ ຂຶ້ນ [໑]໕ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໓ (ວັນອັງຄານ) ມີຮວຍສີ ໝາຍມີ  
ສາວຄຳອ່ອນສີ ພ້ອມດ້ວຍລູກເຕົ້າຊູ່ຄົນ ຢູ່ບ້ານຫຼັກຄຳ ມີສັດທາເປັນອັນຍິ່ງຈິ່ງໄດ້ສ້າງທັງສີຄືວ່າ  
ອາກາລະວັດຕະສູດ ທານໄວ້ກັບສາສະໜາພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ ເພື່ອເປັນປະໂຫຍດສາທາລະນະຊົນ ຜູ້  
ໄຄ່ປະຕິປະຕິ(ປະຕິບັດ)ຕໍ່ໄປ ຕາບຕໍ່ເກົ່າ ໕ ພັນວັດສາ ແລະຂໍໃຫ້ຜູ້ຂ້າທັງຫຼາຍໄດ້ເຖິງສຸກ ໓  
ປະການມີນິບພານເປັນທີ່ສຸດ ກໍຂ້າເຫັນ.

In Chulasakarāt 1282, [...], on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon in the third lunar month, the third day of the week (Tuesday), a *hwai si* day, [AD 1921, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, Tuesday]. I, Miss Kham-ònsi of Ban Lak Kham, together with all of my offspring, have deep faith [in Buddhism], [so we] sponsored this manuscript of the Akaravattasut and offered it as alms to Buddhism, for the benefit of all people through five thousand years. [We] ask for three kinds of happiness (in the human world, heaven and *nibbāna*), with *nibbāna* as the end result.

In this colophon, the fact that the scribe (or scribes) used the word *ທານ* (*dāna*, giving) in this work might indicate that, not only did the donors sponsor the copying of this manuscript, but they also organized a ceremony for donating it to the monastery. This seems to suggest that the donors followed the traditional methods of manuscript making. Furthermore, the donors hoped that the manuscript, or their offering, would become widely known by monks and laypeople alike, so that the donation might benefit all of the people interested in carrying out this tradition, especially devout Buddhists.

Colophons of such texts typically conclude with a phrase in Pali, but this manuscript is an exception as it ends with the Lao phrase: “ຂໍໃຫ້ຜູ້ຂ້າທັງຫຼາຍໄດ້ເຖິງສຸກ ໓ ປະການມີນິບພານເປັນທີ່ສຸດ ກໍຂ້າເຊັ່ນ” – “[We] ask for three kinds of happiness, with *nibbāna* as the end result”. This also reflects the scribe’s knowledge about the organization of the colophon. He might not have known the contents of a typical colophon well and wrote this one according to those principles; but he worked on the colophon in accordance with his own understanding of the usage of vernacular language expression. However, some might consider his usage of Lao at the end of the colophon instead of Pali to be a mistake. Perhaps it was his intention to use Lao here in order to make the text more readable for those lacking knowledge of the Pali language.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0100**

This manuscript, dated Chulasakarat 1280 (AD 1918), is entitled Mungkhunsut (ມຸງຄຸນສູດ), a variant of the Pali term *maṅgala sutta*, which means a discourse or a discussion of auspicious behaviour and acts. The manuscript comprises 57 palm leaves which measure 55.4 cm in length and 4.4 cm in width, with no blank leaves. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines on each page, using the Sanskrit orthographic system for its pagination system.

The text of this manuscript is a discussion between the Buddha and a goddess. The text says that during the Buddha’s lifetime, a goddess came down from the heavens to ask the Buddha about virtuous acts. She met the Buddha at the monastery of Jetavan where he was surrounded by monks. The goddess then asked the Buddha explain the meaning of virtuous acts. The Buddha replied that there are numerous virtuous acts such as avoiding the advice of wicked men, but rather listen to learned ones, and the worship of the Triple Gem. This text depicts a goddess who is uncertain about the truth, reality, or nature of all beings in this world. Upon having such feelings, she tries to find the answers by discussing her doubts with the Enlightened One. Therefore, anyone who is uncertain about the truth should avoid meeting a wicked man, and should instead seek out a learned man, as a wicked man can convince someone to commit evil deeds, while a man of learning can bring about positive results in one’s life.

Another peculiarity of this manuscript is that it possesses two colophons. They indicate that the manuscript was donated on two different occasions, in this instance, however, by the same donor. The first colophon appears at the end of the text, on the same leaf as the text itself, whereas the second one is on a separate leaf: in effect, the last leaf of the manuscript. The contents of the two colophons are as follows:

- (໑) ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໘໐ ຕົວ ປີເບີກສະງ້າ ເດືອນຍີ່ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໖ (ວັນສຸກ) ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມ ກອງງາຍ. ພາຍມີ ທິດຍາ [ແລະ]ສາວຂໍາ ບ້ານຫຼັກຄໍາ ມີໃຈໃສສັດທາສ້າງທັງສີມົງຄັນທິຜູກນີ້ ໄວ້ ກັບສາສະໜາພະ[ພຸດທະ]ເຈົ້າ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ້າ ໕໐໐໐ [ວັດ]ສາ ກັບທັງພໍ່ແມ່ແລະຍາດຕິກໍາບິດາມານດາ. ປະການນຶ່ງ ຂໍອຸທິດໂກສິນນີ້ນໍາຄໍາຊູຝູງຍາດທັງຫຼາຍ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ້າເຂົ້າສູ່ນິບພານ ກໍຂ້າເທີ້ນ. ນິບພານະ ປັດຈະໂຍ ໂຫຕຸ ໂນ.
- (໒) ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໘໒ ຕົວ ປີເບີກສະງ້າ ເດືອນຍີ່ ແຮມ ໑໓ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໕ (ວັນພະຫັດ) ຍາມກອງງາຍ. ພາຍມີ ທິດຍາ ສາວຂໍາ ຜົວເມຍ ໄດ້ສ້າງທັງສີ ມົງຄັນທິບັນດິດ ມົງຄັນນະສູດນີ້ ໄວ້ກັບວໍລະພຸດທະ ສາສະໜາ. ຂໍໃຫ້ພັນຈາກທຸກ ໃຫ້ໄດ້ເຖິງສຸກ ໓ ປະການ ມີນິລະພານເປັນທີ່ແລ້ວ ກໍຂ້າເທີ້ນ. ທຸວັງ ໒ ປະລະມັງ ສຸຂັງ.

- (1) In Chulasakarat 1280, a *poek sanga* year, in the second lunar month, on the tenth day of the waxing moon, the sixth day of the week (Friday), [AD 1918, the 13<sup>rd</sup> of December, Friday], at *nyam kòng ngai* (between 7:30 and 9:00 am). [We], Thit Nya [and] Ms Kham of Ban Lak Kham have deep faith [in Buddhism]. [Thus, we] sponsored this manuscript of Mongkhanthi and donated it to Buddhism until the passing of five thousand years. [We sponsor this manuscript] together with our parents' relatives. [We] dedicate the merit gained to our relatives, [the deceased,] until reaching *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna paccayo hotu no* ([We hope] this merit will bring the condition leading us to *nibbāna*).
- (2) In Chulasakarat 1282, a *poek sanga* year, in the second lunar month, on the thirteenth day of the waning moon, the fifth day of the week (Thursday), [AD 1921, the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, Thursday], at *nyam kòng ngai* (between 7:30 and 9:00 am). [We], Thit Nya [and] Mrs Kham, a husband and his wife, sponsored this manuscript of Mongkhanthibandit Mongkhannasut and donated it to Buddhism. [We hope that this merit shall] free us from suffering and bring us the three kinds of happiness (in the human, heavenly and *nibbāna* worlds), of which *nibbāna* is the end. *Dhuvam dhuvam paramam sukham* ([We wish for] eternal happiness).

Colophon 1 seems to have been written soon after the completion of the text. It is written in the traditional style used for colophons; that is, directly at the end of the manuscript's text. Therefore, manuscript BAD-13-1-0100 may have been originally written in the year 1918 as mentioned in Colophon 1, not in 1921, the date stated on Colophon 2. The month and day might also have been of significance for the donors, especially the month, as the donors performed their act of donation both times during the second lunar month, *düan nyi*.



It is a common practice for manuscripts to be donated several times by different donors, but manuscript BAD-13-1-0100 was donated twice by the same donors. In 1918 the donors supported the copying of this manuscript and gave it to Buddhism after its completion. There is no concrete evidence that illuminates the relationship between this manuscript and its donors. One point that should be highlighted, however, is that the person who wrote this manuscript might have been important to them, possibly a senior monk or local scholar.

With respect to its usage, we may surmise that this manuscript was likely used between its first (13/12/1918) and second donation (06/01/1921). During this time, the manuscript might have been used as readings for laypeople during sermons or as educational material to help newly ordained monks and novices master the Tham-Lao script. The donors might have observed or known how the manuscript they donated to Buddhism was used, and that they were proud of it that they organized a ceremony for its re-donation. This also suggests that any person can re-donate some manuscripts or other religious objects which have already been donated by other people if he/she wishes to do so.

### **3. Chanting**

#### **3.1 Overview**

A number of manuscripts containing Buddhist chants have been found in two of the five monasteries,<sup>72</sup> Vat Saen Sukharam and Vat Xiang Thòng, which are related to the chanting of *mon* (𑖓𑖞) (Pali: *manta*). These texts, which are in Pali, are every day chanted aloud by members of the monastery, who must learn these texts by heart. If they do not, they are not be allowed to participate in the chanting. This is challenging for newly ordained monks and novices because the ability to memorize these texts determines how their level of merit is assessed by others. Those with insufficient merit are expected to leave the monastery and return to their families. As a matter of fact, the chanting of these texts from memory is a challenge for all monks and novices, not only the newly ordained ones.

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<sup>72</sup> The five monasteries are: Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS), Vat Suvannakhili (VSK), Vat Pak Kham (VPK), Vat Xiang Thòng (VXT), and Vat Xiang Muan (VXM).

Table 3.3<sup>73</sup>: Various Texts for Chanting found in Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS) and Vat Xiang Thòng (VXT)

No	Title	Number of fascicles/versions found in VSS	Number of fascicles/versions found in VXT	Total
1	Sut Mon Doek (ສູດມົນເດິກ)	3*	-	3
2	Sut Mon Kang (ສູດມົນກາງ)	1	-	1
3	Pha Bali Sut Mon (ພະບາລີສູດມົນ)	1*	2	3
4	Sut Mon (ສູດມົນ)	-	3	3
5	Sut Mon Nòi (ສູດມົນນ້ອຍ)	-	4	4
6	Sut Mon Hòm (ສູດມົນຮອມ)	-	1	1
7	Bali Sut Mon (ບາລີສູດມົນ)	-	2	2
8	Sut Mon Tang Tang (ສູດມົນຕ່າງໆ)	-	1	1

The table shows that both VSS and VXT possess the chant known as Pha Bali Sut Mon. One version was found in VSS, the monastery where Sathu Nyai Khamchan, the former president of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship of the province of Luang Prabang, resided. Two versions were found in VXT, the residence of Sathu Nyai One Keo, the current president of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship of the province of Luang Prabang. In addition the Sut Mon Doek and Sut Mon Kang were found in VSS, whereas the Sut Mon, Sut Mon Nòi, Sut Mon Hòm, Bali Sut Mon, and Sut Mon Tang Tang were found in VXT. Below we examine some of the passages found on the manuscript leaves that reflect the knowledge of Buddhist scholars.

### 3.2 Passages found on Chant Manuscripts

The concluding remark and colophon of the two versions of the Sut Mon Doek, BAD-13-1-0076 (A) and BAD-13-1-0148 (B), are examine here. A short passage of Version A located next to the end of the main text contains some points of interests for this study. The passage reads:

ຖ້າບຸກຄະລະຕົນໃດກໍ່ຕີ ຈັກຂຶ້ນໃຈເອົາໜັງສືນີ້ແລ້ວ ຖ້າຕົກເຫຼືອ ແລະບໍ່ແມ່ນບໍ່ພໍ ຂໍໃຫ້ແປງນໍາແດ່  
ຂະນ້ອຍທ້ອນ. ວັດໜອງແລ.

<sup>73</sup> The figures with an asterisks are available for access. They had already been listed and stored in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode in Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS), Luang Prabang. The access numbers of the three versions of Sut Mon Doek are BAD-13-1-0076, BAD-13-1-0077, BAD-13-1-0148;. The access number for Pha Bali Sut Mon is BAD-13-1-0327. The other remaining versions detailed in the table have not been listed yet. However, they have been surveyed and kept properly in various storage cabinets in VSS and VXT, Luang Prabang.

Translation: If anyone, while learning this text by heart, [should find any] omissions or additions which are inaccurate or lacking, I ask that you please fix [these mistakes] for me. Vat Nòng (A).

The passage above is evidence of the tradition of learning texts, especially sacred religious texts, verbatim. Such methods may have also existed before the introduction of Buddhism into Lao society in order to memorize texts believed to grant supernatural powers such as spells or other magical texts. This is most likely something which contributed to the spread of Buddhism amongst the Lao people. Any monk who proselytizes needs to be able to recite the texts accurately and with skill in order to gain respect from the indigenous people. This may be the reason why such a significant number of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts containing various magic texts were found in various monasteries in Luang Prabang.

Not only does the passage demonstrate the pedagogical approaches to spreading Buddhist teaching, but also the methods used for writing/copying as well. The way in which the writer instructs the readers to correct any mistakes that they find is reminiscent of the practices of an editor in the modern publication world. It both acknowledges possible shortcomings and mentions the purpose of the text, as well as how it should be read and used.

The colophon tells us that this manuscript was copied in BE 2491, or 1948 AD. At the time this work was written, the scribe may have been familiar with various types of printed material – most likely books, magazines, and newspapers – that had been delivered to his own *vat* and other monasteries. By reading these printed materials, he may have decided that some introductory remarks would be helpful for readers to better understand the contents of the work in question. From the style of this short passage, it seems quite reasonable to say that he was indeed influenced by the structure and format of modern printed materials.

The scribe's recommendations may also reflect his own experience in using palm-leaf manuscripts. The scribe seems to know that a single story or text may be written or copied at different times by different people. It is likely that, at the time they were making the copies, some scribes (copyists) were not so familiar with the story or text. In consequence, some of these versions might contain undetermined mistakes. In response, the scribe of this version performed an act of respect to readers by asking them to excuse any potential mistakes.

The final words of the passage, “Vat Nòng”, can be recognized as part of the traditional practice of exchanging palm-leaf manuscripts between monasteries. Although

this word indicates that this version originally belonged to Vat Nong, there is no information about how and when it became the property of Vat Saen Sukharam, probably through Sathu Nyai Khamchan. It is not uncommon for a manuscript to be borrowed by another person so that it can be used for sermons and lessons, or as template for reproduction. If the borrower keeps the manuscript for a long period of time, the original owner may forget about it. Frequently, such a manuscript is considered an indirect gift from the owner, especially if the owner possesses many versions of the same text.

Just as in Version A, the colophon in Version B appears next to the end of the main text. It reads:

ໜັງສືຄອງສູດມົນເດິກ ໃຜຢາກໄດ້ໃຫ້ແຕ່ຂັນຫ້າຄູ່ບົດເນີ ໃຫ້ຂຶ້ນໃຈສູດສໍາເລີນທຸກຄໍາເຊົ້າວັນຄືນ  
ຢ່າໃຫ້ຂາດເປັນປົກກະຕິ ເທົ່າສິ້ນຊີວິດດີ [...] ແລະນິບພານກໍໄດ້ ລາບກໍໄດ້ແລເຈົ້າເອີຍ.

Translation: Anyone wanting to acquire this text of Sut Mon Doek is to present an offering of five pairs of flowers and candles (ຂັນຫ້າ) [before learning] each chapter. Recite them every day and night, never failing to do so regularly, until the end of your life. [Through this,] both nibbāna and good fortune can be achieved (B).

First of all, this passage indicates the importance of presenting an offering before one commences study in former times. If learning from recorded written materials, then one's respect was to be offered to those responsible for the creation or dissemination of the text. While all texts were considered sacred in some way due to their rarity, this was especially true for those texts which were recorded in the holy script and learned by heart. Here, texts are written in the Tham-Lao script and in Pali – the latter being the language used to record the Buddha's teachings. Therefore, it is important that learners reflect on the sacredness of these texts while they are learning. While studying these texts, the reader must sit with their hands in the prayer position in front of them in order to show reverence to their source of knowledge.

From the passage above, we can speculate that the scribe may have felt that there were problems regarding the standards for copying manuscripts at this time. He may have observed learners not following the traditional methods of learning, or being disrespectful to the fascicle of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the Buddha's teachings. He may have been concerned that such actions might lead to a decrease in the faith of the laypeople, thereby depleting the strength of Buddhism. To guard against this, he left his request next to the end of the main text.

The materials required for offering named here are commonplace in the lives of those living at the temple. Inhabitants normally keep candles in their abodes, and flowers can be picked from various plants in the monastery. The candles and flowers are placed on a platter or in a bowl in order to be presented as a suitable offering. Offering up such a platter, upon which five candles and five flowers rest, is the most basic way to display one’s respect and devotion to the Triple Gem. Therefore, such platters are a necessity for all religious ceremonies such as festivals, merit-making events, and ordinations. The fact that the scribe took the time to stress this matter is evidence of his desire for others to help propagate and preserve the Buddhist faith.

The scribe left an additional comment at the end of the colophon B that merit could also be gained by reciting this text. He suggests that a learner should not stop narrating the text daily even after having already committed it to memory verbatim. By reciting the text every day, the reader not only facilitates access to *nibbāna*, but also invites good fortune into his/her present life. The scribe’s remarks may contain more meaning than one may extrapolate at first glance. It is possible that he knew that monks and novices had tremendous difficulties with the memorization of Sut Mon Doek, and this was his way of encouraging them to be patient and to keep on practicing.

Alongside the texts in Pali, a number of the corrections of Pali words – both of original forms and of variants used in various palm-leaf manuscripts – undoubtedly showcase the monks’ knowledge and experience in Pali. Hundius (1990: 27) contends that, “It is easy to imagine that the majority of people who volunteered or who were assigned the task of copying Pāli manuscripts did not know Pāli sufficiently well to know exactly what they were writing about.” A number of fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts recently found in five monasteries in Luang Prabang contain these type of corrections (for an example see Figure 3.4 below).

Figure 3.4: Manuscript corrections

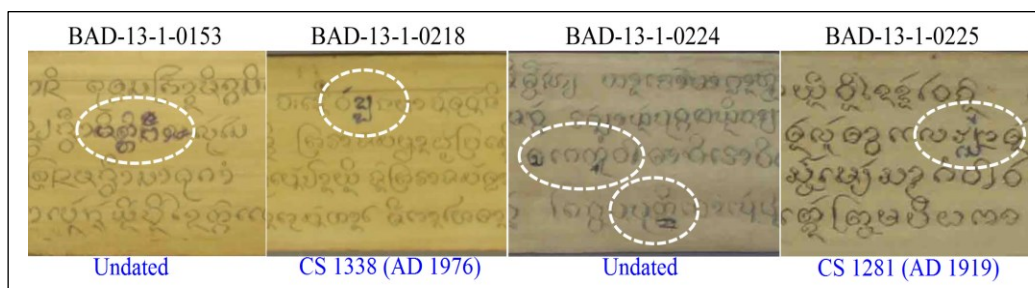


Table 3.4: Manuscript corrections

	Misspelling	Correction	Meaning
BAD-13-1-0153	mitti...	kittikā	name of a planet; famous
BAD-13-1-0218	vadnā	vaḍḍanā	develop; progress; last forever
BAD-13-1-0224	daketū	daketu	ray, beam of light, splendour, effulgence
	muṇṇī	muṇī	Buddha; a holy man, a sage, wise man
BAD-13-1-0225	nā	senā	army; attendant

The table above indicates that various palm-leaf manuscripts were written without proofreading or editing. As a result, they contained many obvious mistakes, mostly misspellings. However, such logic was not applied in ancient times, as the value of the text as a whole was viewed as being more important than the accuracy of each word. Many Buddhist scholars who were knowledgeable of Pali found that numerous palm-leaf manuscripts contained a number of misspelled words. To response, they corrected such mistakes in order to purify the Buddhist texts.

Traditionally, all types of Pali texts are considered to document the Buddha’s words and are used for numerous purposes by Lao Buddhists in Luang Prabang in particular, and Laos in general. Such texts can be divided into two main categories: texts for chanting in official Sangha ceremonies (Pali: *saṅghakamma*), and text used for other ceremonies, mostly organized and carried out by laypeople. The aims of ceremonies organized by lay people mainly revolve around protection from and removal of bad luck, as well as to bring about good fortune in its place. The form of Pali utilized depend on the type of ceremony. Frequently, the single performance of a ceremony covers both purposes. However, the specific details of these ceremonies are not the focus of this study. Nevertheless, these are mentioned here in order to demonstrate the importance Pali texts; in short, monks invited to participate in ritual ceremonies must be able to chant these texts, both loudly and correctly.

## 4. Jataka

### 4.1 Overview

The Jataka (Pali: *jāṭaka*) tales are known to the Lao people as Pha Chao Sai Sat (ພະເຈົ້າໃຊ້ຊາດ). The word *sai sat* itself refers to the notion that current life situation of any person is a direct result of that person’s actions in past lives. In essence, this is the belief in the Law of Kamma, a notion popularly expressed through the Western idiom “you reap what you

sow”. Similar sentiments can be found in Lao saying “*bun nam kam taeng* (ບຸນນຳກຳແຕ່ງ)”, which can be interpreted as good merit follows those who have done good deeds. Conversely, bad karma can bring about great suffering to those who have committed wrongdoings. Devout Lao Buddhists believe in the Law of Karma. As such, they do not blame anybody else for their suffering in this life and believe that it is their own karma which is responsible for their present circumstances. Pha Chao Sai Sat recounts how the Buddha spent the the karma that he had accumulated over previous lives.

The Jataka or the Pha Chao Sai Sat depicts various representations of the Buddha before his attainment of full enlightenment. His past lives include that of the charitable Prince Vessantara – his last life before attaining enlightenment, and becoming recognized as a bodhisatta, or Buddha-to-be. Aside from the, the tales present various accounts of the Buddha in his other, countless, past lives. Lao Buddhists acknowledge the past lives of the Buddha in three different groups of births, namely the Dasa Jataka (ພະເຈົ້າສິບຊາດ), Paññāsa Jataka (ພະເຈົ້າຫ້າສິບຊາດ), and Pañcasata Jataka (ພະເຈົ້າຫ້າຮ້ອຍຊາດ). The total number of Jataka in this last group is considerably different from that of Sri Lanka, compiled in Pali in the fifth century and translated into English by the Pali Text Society of London in 1906, and comprising 547 Jatakas (Wray et al 1972: 15).

While the details of the Jataka tales are not the focus of this study, various passages found in numerous fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts bearing Jataka stories shall be presented. Of all the Jatakas found in the five monasteries in Luang Prabang, Vessantara Jataka is of primary interest for our purposes.

Table 3.5: Fascicles/sets of Jatakas found in the five monasteries

Title		VSS	VKL	VXT	VXM	VPK	Total
Vessantara	Vetsandòn ເວດສັນດອນ	23	6	26	-	-	55
Vidhūra	Vithunbandit ວິທູນບັນດິດ	-	-	2	-	-	2
Nārada	Nalattaphom ນາລັດທະພົມ	-	-	-	1	-	1
Bhuridatta	Phulithat ພູລິທັດ	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mahosatha	Mahosot ມະໂຫສິດ	-	-	1	-	-	1
Nimi	Nemilat ເນມິລາດ	-	1	-	-	-	1
Mahājanaka	Mahasanok ມະຫາຊະນົກ	1	-	-	-	-	1
-	Sitthisan ສິດທິສານ	-	1	-	-	-	1
-	Sulinthakuman ສຸລິນທະກຸມານ	1	-	-	-	-	1
-	Samatsisuthon ສະໝາດສີສຸທິນ	4	-	2	-	-	6
-	Susavannachak ສຸຊາວັນນະຈັກ	1	-	-	1	-	2
-	Sunanthalat ສຸນັນທະລາດ	-	-	1	-	-	1
-	Thanansaibandit ທະນັນໄຊບັນດິດ	-	-	1	-	-	1
-	Sovat ໂສວັດ	-	-	1	-	-	1
-	Phalasangkhanya ພະລະສັງຂະຫຍາ	4	-	-	-	-	4

–	Suvannamekha makhonkham ສູວັນນະເມຂະໝາຂົນຄຳ	1	-	-	-	-	1
–	Phanyasatthon ພະຍາສັດທິນ	1	-	-	-	-	1

## 4.2 Sample of the Jataka: Prince Vessantara

### The Story of Prince Vessantara

The Vessantara Jataka (VJ) is the last story of the Jataka which is a series of 547 canonical tales (Cowell 1907: 246) recounting the past lives of the Buddha. This particular Jataka story is familiar to Lao Buddhists by the name of Phavet or Phavetsandòn. Phavet is also the name of the traditional festival, Bun Phavet, which is held sometime around the fourth lunar month of (March/April) every year. The festival lasts two or three days, with the story of Prince Vessantara being recited all day on the final day of the festivities. The story, composed in verse form and comprising thirteen chapters or *kan* (ກັນ), is chanted aloud by monks and novices with years of experience. The text combines Pali words and phrases with the Lao translations thereof.

The thirteen chapters of the story are as follow: Thatsaphòn, Himmaphan, Thanakhan, Vannaphavet, Suisaka, Chunlaphon, Mahaphon, Kumman, Matthi, Sakkaban, Mahalat, Sakkati, and Nakhòn. According to tradition, three of these – Himmaphan, Thanakhan, Kumman – are usually divided into two volumes. As a consequence of this sub-division, the story of Prince Vessantara is composed and written on sixteen palm-leaf fascicles.<sup>74</sup> Most Lao Buddhists are familiar with the story as it is outlined below:

Thatsaphòn: the Goddess Phutsadi asks for ten blessings from Lord Inda. These are granted.

Himmaphan: Prince Vessantara donates the auspicious white elephant of his *müang*.

Thanakhan: Prince Vessantara donates horses and a horse-drawn vehicle.

Vannaphavet: Prince Vessantara travels through several deep jungles.

Suisaka: an old ugly Brahmin, Susok (Jujaka), gets a young beautiful wife whose parents cannot return him his money.

Chunlaphon: an old ugly Brahmin, Susok, travels through various jungles and meets the hunter Chettabut.

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<sup>74</sup> For more details, see BAD-13-1-0025, BAD-13-1-0032, BAD-13-1-0099, BAD-13-1-0114, BAD-13-1-0115, BAD-13-1-0217, BAD-13-1-0225, BAD-13-1-0247, etc.



Mahaphon: an old ugly Brahmin, Susok, travels through the deep jungle and meets a hermit whom he asks for directions to the mountain of Vongkot.

Kumman: Prince Vessantara gives away his children – the young Prince Jali and the young Princess Kanha – to Susok.

Matthi: Princess Matthi faints after searching incessantly their children, Jali and Kanha.

Sakkaban: Prince Vessantara gives a Brahmin, who is the God Sakka in disguise, his wife, Princess Matthi.

Mahalat: King Sanjaya, Vessantara's father, gives the Brahmin a great amount of wealth to redeem his grandchildren. The Brahmin then eats and eats until his stomach explodes.

Sakkati: the six royal lineages and all of their attendants meet and collectively faint. Sakka revives them by bringing about heavenly rain or *fon ha kaeo* (ຝົນທ່າແກ້ວ).

Nakhòn: Prince Vessantara and Princess Matthi return to the city in a great procession. Later, Prince Vessantara succeeds his father to take over the throne.

### **Variety of Competences**

Generally speaking, the fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript bearing any story contains the body of that story. Nevertheless, numerous palm-leaf manuscripts containing the story of Prince Vessantara, found in the five monasteries in Luang Prabang, convey information about many matters. They provide details of the Bodhisatta's life and reflect the ability, knowledge and other concerns of the Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang vis-à-vis Buddhism. This is especially the case regarding senior monks able to make and use palm-leaf manuscripts. These can be found in their style of compilation, introductory and concluding remarks, colophons, and other annotated passages.

#### **a) Style of compilation**

The monk who first compiled the Phavetsandòn is recognized as the Great Poet of the Lao Buddhist community, although even those monks who copied the text are honoured as well. The text is composed in the Lao poetic meter of Kòn Hai (ກອນຮ້າຍ) (rhyme verse). Furthermore, some lines of the story are composed according to the rule of Kap (ກາບ) (poetic composition).

Both Kòn Hai and Kap have no fixed numbers of words per line. Similarly, the number of lines in each verse is unfixed as well. Generally, any line containing more than

six words is usually considered hemistich of a Kòn verse (ກອນ), while a line with less than six words is called hemitich of a Kap verse. The most important requirement of the verse is dependent not on the numbers of words which are used in each line, but on the assonance (vowel rhyme) between the lines. The vowel in the last syllable of any line must rhyme with any word/syllable, although usually not the last syllable, of the following line (Department of Lao Language and Literature, 2004: 85–94). However, the the story here was written in *linea continua* – or no spaces between parts on palm leaves which are about 50 to 60 centimetres in length. Any line of the leaf consisted of several poetic parts. For instance, three lines written on the second page of folio 10 belonging to the manuscript BAD-13-1-0247, the chapter of Kumman Pai (Kumman Vol. 2), comprised of more than ten poetical parts. See the sample below (each pair of numeral, such as 1–1, 2–2, and 3–3 among others, indicating the rhyme in a stanza):

... (1) uttarivā ອອກມາຈາກ ພະປັນນະສາລາ<sup>1</sup> (2) ມີຄຳຈົນດາ<sup>1</sup>ຊື່ນບານ<sup>2</sup> (3) ອະທິຖານ<sup>2</sup>  
ຍັງຕົນໃຫ້ໝັ້ນດີ<sup>3</sup> (4) nisiddi<sup>3</sup> ເຈົ້າກໍສະຖິດຢູ່<sup>4</sup> (5) ແທບພະແກ້ວກູ້<sup>4</sup>ສາລາ<sup>5</sup> ມີແລ (6)  
kumā<sup>5</sup>ro ເມື່ອນັ້ນສ່ວນຕັ້ງເຈົ້າກຸມມານທັງສອງ ອັນພາມຫາກຕີບໍ່ຂາດ<sup>6</sup> (7) ບໍ່ອາດ<sup>6</sup>ຈັກອິດຢູ່  
ໄດ້<sup>7</sup> (8) ກໍຮ້ອງໄຫ້<sup>7</sup>ຕໍ່ນ້ອງແຫ່ງຕົນວ່າ<sup>8</sup> (9) saccamkilevama<sup>8</sup>hamsu evakacciyānarā-  
ida yassa natthi pakā mātā ດູລານ້ອງກັນຫາ<sup>9</sup> (10) ekacciyā<sup>9</sup> narā ອັນວ່າຄົນທັງຫຼາຍ  
ໃນໂລກນີ້ລາງພ່ອງກ່າວວ່າ<sup>10</sup> (11) yassa natthiskāmātā<sup>10</sup> ເດັກນ້ອຍຜູ້ໃດຕັ້ງແຮກແຕ່ເກີດ  
ມາ<sup>11</sup> (12) ບໍ່ມີແມ່ມານດາ<sup>11</sup>ອັນອອຍທຸກນັກສິ້ນຂົນຂວາຍ<sup>12</sup> (13) ແມ່ນວ່າມີຊີວິດກໍລ່ຽມຕາຍ<sup>12</sup>  
ລຳບາກ<sup>13</sup> (14) ທຸກຍາກ<sup>13</sup>ຫອດຫິວນິມ<sup>14</sup> (15) ຄວາມບູລົມ<sup>14</sup>ວ່າໄວ້<sup>15</sup> (16) ບັດນີ້ກໍມາໄດ້<sup>15</sup>  
ແກ່ຮາພີ່ນ້ອງທັງສອງແລນາ ...

Translation: [Prince Vessantara] came out of his hermitage with a feeling of happiness, and he concentrated on his [particular wish]. Then, [he peacefully] sat on a seat next to his hermitage. At the same time, Jali and Kanha were flogged by Jujaka Brahmin [who dragged them on the way to his home]. They could not stand for [the Brahmin's heartlessness], they cried [compassionately]. Jali shed tears and said to Kanha that some people in this world say children who are motherless after their birth will suffer from numerous deficiencies. Although they are alive, it will be as if they were half-dead – [and] milk-thirstiness will bring them serious pain. [Our] ancestor has left these words [to teach us]. Now such words become true for the two of us.

Both long poetical lines composed in Kòn Hai and the short lines of Kap can be found in the above example. Lines (2), (4), (14) and (15), the shortest lines in the passage, each consist of five words/syllables, whereas the longest one, line (6), contains fifteen words.

This seems less important than their rhymes which are marked by the same numbers in order to make them easier to observe.

A monk or a novice with experience preaching the story of Prince Vessatatra is able to deftly adjust both the long lines and the short lines used composing the story. This means they may add some words into the short lines and disregard some words in the long ones. They have to use their judgement to decide which words are most suitable to leave out or add in or order to make the variance in line length as low as possible. Ensuring that the lines of similar length during recitation makes the story more pleasing for the listeners. In addition, most experienced preachers can recite their favourite chapters of the story from memory. Some preachers with charming voices are invited to perform certain chapters repeatedly.

Distance from *linea continua*, some versions of Prince Vessantara were composed by utilizing punctuation. The scribes of these versions used vertical lines to separate the different parts of the poem. One may interpret this as a sign that the scribes were concerned about the usage of their works; in brief, they may have been afraid that monks and novices lacking experience in preaching would face unexpected difficulties because they would be unable to locate where the proper stops are. Indeed, one must be quite well-versed in such texts in order to read them aloud fluently.

In order to help monks and novices lacking experience in preaching the story of Prince Vessantara, the scribes use punctuation within their works. These symbols not only serve to divide the lines of poetry, but also act as a short break when reading in order to give the reader time to catch his breath, before continuing on to the next line. A passage of a little more than two lines found on the second page of folio 10 of manuscript number BAD-13-1-0099, the Nakhòn chapter, serves here as an example:

...| (1) tathā ພະລາຊະມັດທິທະລິງໂສມສີເລີດພ້າຈະແຈ່ມໜ້າຄັດສີລັດສະໝີໄຫຼຜາຍແພງ |  
(2) ເມື່ອນາງທອດແຂນກາຍໄກວແກວ່ງໂສມນາງແຄນສາວສະຫວັນ | (3) ປະກອບດ້ວຍຮິມ  
ພັນງາມຢິ່ງແຕ້ມແຍ້ມແຍ້ມແລ້ວຈຶ່ງຈາລະຈາ | (4) ໂສມນາງເປັນຢາຕາແກ່ຄົນໃນໂລກໃຜ  
ເຫັນກໍທາຍໂສກເສົ້າໂສກາ | (5) ທະລິງລັກຂະນາຫຼາຍທຸກແຫ່ງຍາມເມື່ອນາງເບື້ອງແກວ່ງຕີນ  
ໄປ | (6) ຄ່ອຍຄາໄຄຕີນອາດຍົວລະຍາດຍ້າຍລີລາ | (7) ໄປກ່ອນໜ້ານາງນັກສະໜົມ  
ທັງຫຼາຍກໍມີແລ | ...

Translation: At that time, Princess Matthi who is very pretty and charming, [and whose] face is brilliant, shines gracefully. When she passes by, moving her arms back-and-forth, she seems like a goddess. Her gums are very beautiful, and she always shows a lovely smile before speaking. Her shape is considered good-looking by all people in this world – by seeing her, one can

recover from one's anguish. Her charming characters cannot be presented in their entirety. [Even] when walking in a procession, leading her female attendants, she moves in a graceful manner.

According to the rules of Kap and Kòn verification, this verse can be restructured. Apart from line (7), the other lines can be divided into two lines of verse. However, attention should be given here to line (1) which can probably be divided into four lines. Therefore, this seven-line verse can become a fifteen-line verse, as shown below:

...| (1) tathā ພະລາຊະມັດທິ | (2) ທະລິງໂສມສີເລີດພ້າ | (3) ຈະແຈ່ມໜ້າຄັດສີ | (4) ລັດສະໝີໄຫຼຜາຍແພງ | (5) ເມື່ອນາງທອດແຂນກາຍໄກວແກວ່ງ | (6) ໂສມນາງແຂ່ງສາວສະຫວັນ | (7) ປະກອບດ້ວຍຮິມພັນງາມຍິ່ງແຕ້ມ | (8) ແຍ້ມແຍ້ມແລ້ວຈຶ່ງຈາລະຈາ | (9) ໂສມນາງເປັນຢາຕາແກ່ຄົນໃນໂລກ | (10) ໃຜເຫັນກໍຫາຍໂສກເລື້ອໂສກາ | (11) ທະລິງລັກຂະນາຫຼາຍທຸກແຫ່ງ | (12) ຍາມເມື່ອນາງເບື້ອງແກວ່ງຕີນໄປ | (13) ຄ່ອຍຄາໂຄຕິນອາດ | (14) ຍິວລະຍາດຍ້າຍລີລາ | (15) ໄປກ່ອນໜ້ານາງນັກສະໜົມທັງຫຼາຍກໍມີແລ | ...

The scribe's use of a vertical line to mark a space between lines of verse – but with no fixed numbers of lines – is very useful for monks and novices who are less familiar with preaching of the story of Prince Vessantara. They can stop preaching for a while when reaching a vertical line, or after every two or more lines if the lines are very short. However, in the case of this verse, the scribe, using a vertical line, may have not intended to emphasize the rules of verse writing; rather, they wanted to give priority to the breaks in the text while preaching.

The number of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts found and archived during this study containing vertical lines and symbols is noticeably high.<sup>75</sup> This may indicate the influence of modern writing techniques on the production of manuscripts in the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). The scribes used any symbol in their works of manuscript-writings might have certain intention. The above manuscript, BAD-13-1-0099, contains only one of the original sixteen fascicles bearing the story of Prince Vessantara, as the other fifteen fascicles are missing. Therefore, the exact purpose of the vertical lines in the manuscript remains undetermined. Nevertheless, the vertical line is evidently useful in helping to train preachers to practice the rhythm of their chants. As

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<sup>75</sup> For more details, see BAD-13-1-0016, BAD-13-1-0020, BAD-13-1-0070, BAD-13-1-0071, BAD-13-1-0072, BAD-13-1-0078, BAD-13-1-0148, BAD-13-1-0157, BAD-13-1-0166, BAD-13-1-0280, BAD-13-1-0295, BAD-13-1-0307; BAD-13-2-018, BAD-13-2-020, BAD-13-2-021, BAD-13-2-041, BAD-13-2-043, BAD-13-2-046, etc.

such, it should be recognized that the Lao Buddhist Sangha of Luang Prabang has taught and learned to preach the story of Vessantara in this manner.

#### b) Introductory and concluding remarks

Generally speaking, a Jataka, or a story of the various former lives of Bodhisatta, consists of three parts: an introductory text, a main text, and a concluding remark, the last of which is the shortest. Here, priority is given to the introductory text and the concluding remarks. The former is composed in Pali and relates to the main text. The words in Pali are followed by the word *sādhavo* which, although seemingly derived from Pali and probably a variant of the Pali word *sādhū*<sup>76</sup>, still has undetermined origins. The equivalent of the word in Lao often comprises multiple words. However, one of them – also derived from Pali and placed in the middle – has a somewhat similar meaning to that of *sādhū* and the other words serve as its modifier. For instance, the introductory text of manuscript number BAD-13-1-0025, the chapter of Kumman Ton (Kumman Vol. 1) reads:

*Namāmi rattanateyyā jujakopi acuttatāpassena kathitamaggena gantvā  
yāva caturassa pokkharanītiraṃ cintesi* (1) *sādhavo* ດູລາສັບບຸລີສະຫັງຫຼາຍ  
(2) *assamo* ອັນວ່າອາສິມບິດສາລາຖານະອັນວິເສດ (3) ແຫ່ງພະເໜວດສັນຕະລະທໍາມິກະ  
ລັດສີ ...

Translation: I [, a scribe,] pray that the Triple Gems [will guide me to continue to write this story.] Then, Brahmin Jujaka walked along the path, which was told by Hermit Acutta. Reaching the shore of the artificial quadrangular-pool he thought [that he might come close to the hermitage of Prince Vessantara.] Welcome! All righteous men! [At that time,] the individual hermitage of the hermit Vessantara...

In the above example, all of the text from “*namāmi*” to “*cintesi*” is in Pali. The first two words, *namāmi* and *rattanateyyā*, are an expression of the scribe’s respect towards the Triple Gems. Traditionally, scribes would ritually summon the power of the Triple Gem for inspiration, in order to compose the piece properly.

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<sup>76</sup> In Pali, *u* can orthographically be changed to *ava*. Therefore, it is not unusual that *sādhava* is a variant of *sādhū*. This word must then be combined with *vibhatti* (case-endings), changing its shape, in order to be used in a sentence (Collins, Steven 2006: 18–19; Müller-Hess, Eduard 1884: 59–63; Perniola, Vito 1958: 16–34). For more details about the meaning of *sādhū* see Davids, Thomas W. Rhys and Stede, William 1925: 778 and 1993: 703.

The first poetic line (1), which contains the word *sādhavo* and its equivalent in Lao, serves as a bridge between the Pali words and the accounts being told after it. However, its function is not absolute, as without this line the substance of the story could still be considered complete. Therefore, the point of inserting this sentence here is not for the purposes of clarifying the narrative, but rather to mark the beginning of this chapter of the Prince Vessantara’s story. In other words, it serves as a marker to the audience that a new section of the story is about to commence.

At the end of each chapter, as well as at the end of the story itself, a concluding remark is applied. The key component of the remark is the title, which is either in a longer full form, or a shorter, abbreviated form. The short variants contain the title accompanied by the word *nitthita*, appearing as either *nitthitaṃ* or *nitthitā*, an indication in Pali that the story has reached its end. The form of this word is dependent on the final syllable of the word preceding it. If the last sound of the syllable is *aṃ*, the word *nitthitaṃ* is used, whereas *nitthitā* is used for the syllable with a final sound of *ā*. See the concluding remarks presented below for examples.

- (1) BAD-13-1-0114 (Fascicle 3): *dutiyaḥimmavannanā nitthitā* – this concludes the second volume of Himmaphan.
- (2) BAD-13-1-0186 (Fascicle 16): *nagarakaṇḍaṃ ca vessantarajātakavannanā nitthitā* – this marks the conclusion of the Nakhòn chapter as well as of the Vessantara Jataka.
- (3) BAD-13-1-0114 (Fascicle 7): *Jujakapabbāṃ nitthitaṃ* – this concludes the story of the Brahmin Jujaka.  
(Fascicle 12): *Maddipabbāṃ nitthitaṃ* – this is the conclusion of the Matthi chapter.
- (4) BAD-13-1-0186 (Fascicle 12): *Maddipabbāṃ nitthitaṃ* – this is the conclusion of the Matthi chapter.  
(Fascicle 14): *mahārājapabbāṃ nitthitaṃ* – this is the conclusion of the Mahalat chapter.
- (5) BAD-13-1-0217: *pathamahimmavannaṃ nitthitaṃ* – this is the conclusion of the first volume of Himmaphan.

From these concluding remarks, it should be noted that *nitthitaṃ* appears more frequently than *nitthitā*. Furthermore, the number of palm-leaf fascicles whose concluding remarks contain “*nitthitaṃ*” is greater than that of the ones whose concluding remarks

contain “*nitthitā*”. This is mentioned here in order to demonstrate how the scribe can use such words in a flexible manner in order to ensure that the proper forms are upheld in terms of rhymes within the text.

Although similar to the shorter remarks, except for the fact that the Lao also appears next to the Pali, the Lao expression that appears in these concluding remarks are “*kò sadet bòlabuan khuan thao ni kòn lae*” – which follows the Pali version word for word. Regardless of whether the text in Pali reads “*nitthitaṃ*” or “*nitthitā*”, the Lao expression will not change, as the text is only added for comprehension meaning that rhyming rules need not be observed. Some examples of the longer version can be seen below.

(6) BAD-13-1-0025 (fascicle 10): *pathamakumārapubbaṃ nitthitaṃ* ກໍສະເດັດ ບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the first volume of Kumman has reached its conclusion.

(7) BAD-13-1-0115 (fascicle 3): *dutiyahimmavannanā nitthitā* ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນ ຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the second volume of Himmaphan has reached its conclusion.

(Fascicle 4): *pathamadānakhaṇḍaṃ nitthitaṃ* ກໍສະເດັດ ບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the first volume of Thanakan has reached its conclusion.

Sometimes scribes will also add their own commentary between *nitthitaṃ* or *nitthitā* and the Lao translation of that expression. However, some of the Lao words are slightly different from those in the examples of (6) and (7). This indicates that the scribes have experience in both the composition of verse and the story as well; see, for instance, the concluding remarks below:

(8) BAD-13-1-0099 (Fascicle 16): *mahāvessantarajātakaṃ nitthitaṃ* (1) ກີຍາຈາ ແກ້ໄຂ (2) ໂນຍະມະຫາເຫວດສັນຕະລະຊາດີກກໍແລ້ວສິມຄວນ ບໍລະບວນ ຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling the story of Maha Vetsandòn has reached its conclusion.

(9) BAD-13-1-0115 (Fascicle 6): *vanapavesakaṇḍaṃ nitthitaṃ* (1) ກີຍາກ່າວບັນ ໂພທິສັດເຈົ້າ (2) ເອົາລູກແກ້ວແລະເມຍຮັກ (3) ອັກຄະຊາຍາລາຊະເທວີ (4) ຫນີເຂົ້າໄປຢູ່ໃນຫ້ອງ (5) ຫ້ອງດອຍວິງກິດປັບພັດຕະຄິລິ ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນ ຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling the chapter of Pha Phothisat, in which Pha Vet, together with his wife and

children, are exiled to Mountain Vongkot, has reached its conclusion.

These examples show that two poetical lines were inserted into the concluding remark of BAD-13-1-0099, whereas the concluding remark of BAD-13-1-0115 contains five poetic lines. The concluding remarks in examples (1) to (7) provide the audience of the text with notification that the chapter or section has reached its conclusion. In addition, readers can receive more details about the chapter and story via the commentaries in examples (8) and (9). Not only do the concluding remarks of Fascicle 16 of BAD-13-1-0099 and Fascicle 6 of BAD-13-1-0115 demonstrate the end of the story or chapter, but they also serve as conclusions.

Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection of Vessantara Jataka manuscripts can be divided into two categories, namely: monolingual Pali and bilingual Pali-Lao texts. The manuscripts of other Jataka containing concluding remarks in Lao belong in another category, the monolingual Lao category; they are only written in the Lao script and in the Lao language. The scribes who wrote their concluding remarks in this way may have intended to make the stories easier to read for their target audience. The following concluding remarks provide some examples:

(10) BAD-13-1-0279 (Fascicle 1): ກິຍາຈາຍັງສຸວັນນະຈັກກະຜູກຕົ້ນ ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling or writing the first fascicle of the story of Susavannachak has reached its conclusion.

(Fascicle 7): ກິຍາອັນເທສະໜາຍັງສຸວັນນະຈັກກະຊາດິກຜູກຖ້ວນເຈັດ ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling or writing the seventh fascicle of the story of Susavannachak has reached its conclusion.

(11) BAD-13-1-0281 (Fascicle 2): ກິຍາຈາຍັງທຳມະເທສະໜາສຸວັນນະເມຄະຜູກຖ້ວນສອງ ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling or writing the second fascicle of the sermon of Suvanna-mekha has precisely been finished.

(Fascicle 5): ກິຍາສັງວັນນະນາຍັງທຳມະເທສະໜາສຸວັນນະເມຄະ ຜູກຖ້ວນຫ້າ ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ – the performance of telling or writing the fifth fascicle of the sermon of Susavanna-mekha has reached its conclusion.



(12) BAD-13-1-0313 (Fascicle 2): ຈົບພະຍາສັດທັນບໍລິບູນແຕ່ເທົ່ານີ້ – [the story of] Phanya Satthan has reached its conclusion.

All concluding remarks presented above, both long and short, consist mostly of words of Lao origin, with some words deriving from Pali, especially the titles of the chapters mentioned. There is much variance in the way words borrowed from Pali are written in these texts. Phanya Satthan from Example 12 is found here for Phanya Satthon which is how it is written in other versions. The forms *bòlabuan* in Example 10 and *bòlibun* in Example 12 also serve to illustrate this point as these are two variant forms of the Pali term *paripuṇṇa*<sup>77</sup> which means full, complete, or finished.

The usage of variants seem to indicate an attempt by the scribes to localize their texts. As McDaniel (2009: 124–125) observes: “[m]ost Southeast Asian Buddhist intellectuals compose texts in the vernacular.” Furthermore, not only do they compose texts in their own native languages, but they administer their writings according to their social surroundings as well. This may be one additional reason why multiple versions of a single text are so prevalent in Lao manuscript culture.

The concluding remarks of Fascicle 7 of BAD-13-1-0279 and Fascicles 2 and 5 of BAD-13-1-0281 should be highlighted as they contain some indication of the intentions behind the writing of these manuscripts. The Pali loan words *thesana* (ເທສະໜາ) and *thammathesana* (ທໍາມະເທສະໜາ), which take their original forms from *desanā* (discourse, instruction) and *dhammadesanā* (moral instruction, preaching, sermon),<sup>78</sup> can be found in the concluding remarks of these scribes. This indicates that they intended to make their writing more intelligible to the target audience. In other words, the presence of *thesana* or *thammathesana* in the concluding remarks of a story serves to legitimize or underscore the sacredness of that religious account. Furthermore, the Buddhist laity of Laos, upon hearing the words *thesana* and *thammathesana*, become immediately aware that the text they are listening to is a Buddhist text. They may then link these words to the situation of their usage in ancient times, probably around the time that the Buddha gave his first sermon to his five disciples.

The fact that the concluding remarks are comprised of monolingual Lao words may indicate the intention of the scribes, but this is less so the case for manuscripts which do not include *thesana* or *thammathesana*. Therefore, these words should be recognized as

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<sup>77</sup> For more details about the meaning of *paripuṇṇa*, see Davids, Thomas W. Rhys and Stede, William 1925: 478 and 1993: 429.

<sup>78</sup> For more details about the meaning of *desanā* and *dhammadesanā*, see *Ibid.* 1925: 370 and 1993: 330.

key words used by the scribe to inspire the audience's confidence in the preacher chanting the text in front of them – probably the story or text he has written. A number of concluding remarks of various manuscripts, containing the two words, should probably be considered as indication of the confidence of belief of both the writer and his audience.

Manuscripts BAD-13-1-0114, BAD-13-1-0186, BAD-13-1-0217, BAD-13-1-0025, BAD-13-1-0115, BAD-13-1-0099 – examples 1 to 9 – all contain the story of Prince Vessantara. Altogether there are six versions comprising twenty fascicles, none of which contains a concluding remark with either of the words *thesana* or *thammathesana*. In contrast, in manuscripts BAD-13-1-0279, BAD-13-1-0281, BAD-13-1-0217, BAD-13-1-0313 – examples 10 to 12 – which contain the stories of Susavannachak, Suvannamekha and Phanya Sathan, and comprising seventeen fascicles in total, there are ten fascicles with concluding remarks containing these two words.

Compared with the story of Prince Vessantara – presented in the above examples from (1) to (9) – the other stories of former births or Jataka, that is, example (10) to (12), seem to be expressed by the scribes who wrote the story and colophons. This may indicate that the former relates directly to the Buddha himself. In other words, before his existence as Buddha Gotama he was born as Prince Vessantara, a popular belief amongst Buddhists. The latter, in contrast, containing three stories, is not very familiar to most Buddhists. Therefore, the scribes who inserted the words *thesana* and *thammathesana* into their concluding remarks may have intended to make these texts useable for preaching, and of course, linking them to the Buddha.

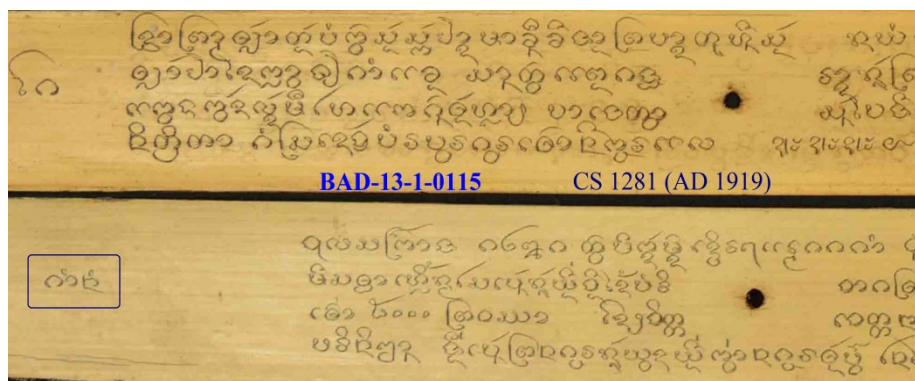
### c) Colophons

A number of fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts recording the story of Prince Vessantara include colophons that were written after the completion of the main texts. Some colophons were written by the scribe of the original manuscript text, whereas other colophons were inserted many months or even years afterward by another. The ink in the incisions of the colophons inserted during the writing of the text itself is usually as dark as the ink found in the main text.<sup>79</sup> The incisions of the colophons written later are either darker or lighter than those of the main texts, even if the scribe inserting the colophon is the same person. Take the colophon on the fascicle of manuscript BAD-13-1-0115 below as an example:

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<sup>79</sup> For more details about the process of making the writing on palm-leaves visible, see Agrawal 1982: 85.

Figure 3.5: The darkness of the ink used for the main text and colophon



According to its colophon, this manuscript was dated Chulasakarat 1281 – equivalent to AD 1919. This suggests that the people of Luang Prabang, from this time onwards, were able to gain knowledge about various subjects and techniques which were distributed and popularly used in their hometown. No doubt, various publications with modern formats and layouts, containing both religious and non-religious subjects, would have also been delivered to monasteries. Monks and novices, as well as former monks and novices, might have been acquainted with these types of publications and found that their formats and layouts were convenient for reading. Being aware of such knowledge, they applied it to support their work writing on palm-leaves. Thus, it is not unusual that the colophon of this manuscript – written in a separate format – differed from the traditional one. Here, the left margin of the palm leaf is wider than those of the other leaves containing the main text.

The colophon of this fascicle seems to have been written after the composition of the main text as both the incisions and the orthography found here are different from those of the main text. Compared with the incisions of the main text, those of the colophon are lighter. Also, the orthography used while writing the colophon is much more similar to that of modern Lao orthography than in the main text due to the use of two tone marks, *mai ek* and *mai tho* (the first and the second tone marks). Furthermore, the word *kham nam* (preface) was written in the left margin of the same page, which might be written by whoever inserted the colophon. The scribe of the colophon was most likely inspired to make this addition based on his exposure to the formatting of modern publications during that time (see Chapter 5 for details).

Like the other manuscripts whose colophons were not written directly after the conclusion of the main text – occasionally in which one or more blank leaves are inserted in between the main text and the colophon – the manuscripts recording the story of Prince Vessantara have some colophons with dates. These dates refer to date of the manuscript’s presentation rather than the completion of the text. The Lao phrase, *litichana laeo* (ລິດຈະນາ

ແລ້ວ), which means something has been written or copied to completion, is usually applied or used in writing, thus it seems that the scribe followed the ancient way of writing colophons. One possibility is that this phrase might have first been used by a scribe who, successively, wrote a colophon after he finished his work of copying the text. Later, his work was carried on and copied from one generation to the next, and the structure of the colophon and expression, which he himself first designed and used, were copied as well.

The Vessantara Jataka is a long story comprising thirteen chapters or *kan*, divided into sixteen palm-leaf fascicles. The title in the left margin on the first leaf or page of each fascicle is not Vessantara, but rather the name of each chapter, such as Thatsaphòn, Himmaphan, Thanakhan, Vannaphavet, and so forth. Without the colophon, a reader who is inexperienced in this Jataka would not be able to determine the title of this manuscript or the name of this story.

Like the main text, the colophons frequently end with a concluding remark, most often in Pali, for instance, *nibbānapaccayo hotu no* (translation: [May this] lead us to attain *nibbāna*), *sādhū sādhū niccaṃ dhuvam*<sup>80</sup> (translation: Well! [May this be] permanently profitable [for us]). Presented below is the colophon of the last fascicle of palm-leaf manuscript BAD-13-1-0099 as an example:

ຈຸນລະສັງກາດໄດ້ ໑໒໘໖ ຕົວ ປີກາບໃຈ ເດືອນ ໖ ຂຶ້ນ ໕ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໔(໕) ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມ  
ກອງງາຍ ໝາຍມີເພຍໄພບູນສະຫວັດ ນາມະກອນຊື່ທິດເພັງ [ແລະ]ນາງເພຍບຸດຕິ [ພ້ອມ  
ດ້ວຍ]ລູກຫຼານຊູ່ຄົນ ຢູ່ບ້ານປ່າຂາມ ໄດ້ມີໃຈໃສສັດທາເປັນອັນຍິ່ງ ຈຶ່ງໄດ້ພ້ອມກັນສ້າງຍິ່ງ  
ມະຫາເວດສັນຕະລະຊາດິກອັນນີ້ ໄວ້ກັບສາສະໜາພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ່າ ໕໐໐໐ ວັດສາ  
ຂໍໃຫ້ບຸນລາສີຝູງນີ້ມາຄຳມາຊູຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ [ທັງ]ຊາດນີ້ແລະຊາດໜ້າ ເປັນແກ່ນເປັນສານ ຂໍ  
[ໃຫ້ເປັນ]ຜົນນຳຂ້າພື້ນຈາກສິງສານ ຕັດບັວງເປັນຈະມານຂາດໄດ້ ຈຶ່ງລຸພະນິບພານດັ່ງຄຳ  
ໝາຍ ແດ່ກໍຂ້າເຫີນ ນິບພານະປັຈຈະໂຍ ໂຫຕຸ ໂນ.

It was Chulasakarāt 1286, a *kap chai* year, the fifth day of the waning moon in the sixth lunar month, a Thursday (AD May 8 1924). The copying of [this fascicle] was completed in the morning (between 7:30 and 9:00 am). [I,] Phia Phaibunsavat, whose [common] name was Thit Pheng, together with Nang Phia Butdi [and] all our children, living at Ban Pakham, were faithful [Buddhists]. [They] made this version of Vessantara Jataka in order to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand years. They asked for good merit to support them in this life and the next.

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<sup>80</sup> *Dhuvam* is Pali word (continuously, consistently, always) which indicates the intention of merit-making of the sponsor of the making of this manuscript. For more details about the meaning of *dhuvam*, see Davids, Thomas W. Rhys and Stede, William 1925: 384 and 1993: 342–343.

[Furthermore, they] wished to pass the cycle of birth [by] cutting off the five traps of *māra*. [And finally, they wished to] attain *nibbāna*. [The colophon finishes with the following Pali words] – *nibbānapaccayo hotu no* (May [this merit] lead us to attain *nibbāna*).

The fact that the colophons are written in the same style as the the main text indicates that there was also a colophon in the manuscript being copied. In practice, a text has to be written or copied according to its contents, whereas the colophon is regularly written according to formulaic expressions. The person who writes a colophon may not copy it from another version, but is obliged to follow the common format for this kind of writing. In other words, a colophon has a certain structure that a scribe has to follow. Compared with the colophon of manuscript BAD-13-1-0099, the colophon of manuscript BAD-13-1-0114 bears many similarities in terms of the format employed and the expressions used. The colophon reads:

ພຸດທະສັງກາດໄດ້ ໒໔໗໑ ຕົວ ປີເບີກສີ ເດືອນຍີ່ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໕ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ [໕]<sup>81</sup> ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມ  
ກອງງາຍ ໝາຍມີສາວທິ ບ້ານທ່າຄົກ ໄດ້ມີໃຈໃສສັດທາເປັນອັນຍິ່ງ ຈິ່ງໄດ້ສ້າງຍັງລຳພະ  
ເທວດສັນຕະລະຊາດິກມັດນີ້ ໄວ້ກັບສາສະໜາ ພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ່າເຖິງ ໕໐໐໐ ປີ ຂໍ  
[ໃຫ້]ບຸນລາສີອັນນີ້[ເປັນ]ຜົນນຳຂ້າພະເຈົ້າພົ້ນຈາກສົງສານ ຕັດບັ້ວງເປັນຈະມານຂາດໄດ້ ຂໍ  
ຈົ່ງລຸເຖິງພະນົບພານດັ່ງຄຳໝາຍ ແຕ່ກໍຂ້າເທີ້ນ ນິພພານະປັຈຈະໂຍ ໂຫຕຸ.

Translation: It was [the year] 2471 of the Buddhist Era, a *poek nyi* year, in the second lunar month, on the fifteenth day of the waning moon, [Thursday] (AD 27 December 1928). The copying of [this fascicle] was completed in the morning (between 7:30 and 9:00 am). Sao Thi of Ban Thakhok was a faithful [Buddhist]. [She] made this bundle (a set of fascicles) of the Jataka in order to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand years. She asked for good merit to support her in passing the cycle of birth [by] cutting off the five traps of *māra*. [And finally, she wished to] reach *nibbāna*. [The colophon of this fascicle also ended with the same Pali words] – *nibbānapaccayo hotu* (May [this merit] lead [me] to attain *nibbāna*).

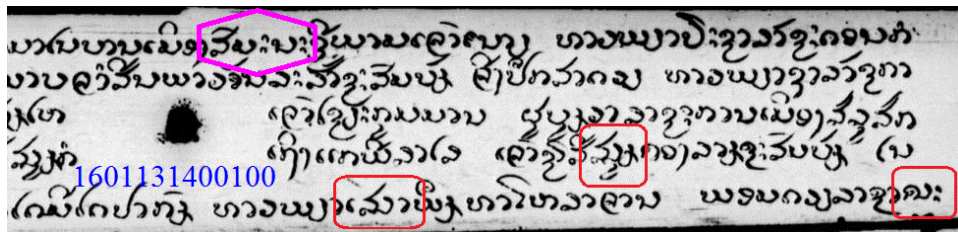
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<sup>81</sup> This version seems to comprise sixteen fascicles of palm leaves; however, only six of them – fascicles 2, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 16 – have been found. Their colophons are similar to each other. However, the number corresponding to a day in a week in the colophon of fascicle 16 (the last one) is missing, whereas the number ‘5’ appears in the colophons of the remaining fascicles.

According to their colophons, manuscript BAD-13-1-0099 was made in 1924 AD and manuscript BAD-13-1-0114 was created four years later. They were both discovered in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, but the handwritings found in the colophons indicate two different scribes. This assertion is underscored by the fact that the two manuscripts differ in their orthographies. Additionally, various types of abbreviations or shortened words (*kham nyò*) were commonly written on the palm leaves. The scribe of BAD-13-1-0114 followed the traditional way of writing colophons, even using the exact word shortenings used by the Lao Buhan script as well, whereas the scribe of BAD-13-1-009 used full words and forewent the traditional abbreviations.

One way of shortening Lao words is to use a single consonant grapheme functioning as two initials of two syllables. This means that whenever two words have the same initial alongside each other, one initial is omitted and its vowel combines with the remaining one. Together with this, there is another phenomenon, namely a single consonant performing two functions in a polysyllabic word acting both as a final consonant for the initial syllable in which it appears and as the initial consonant for the the next syllable with which it begins.

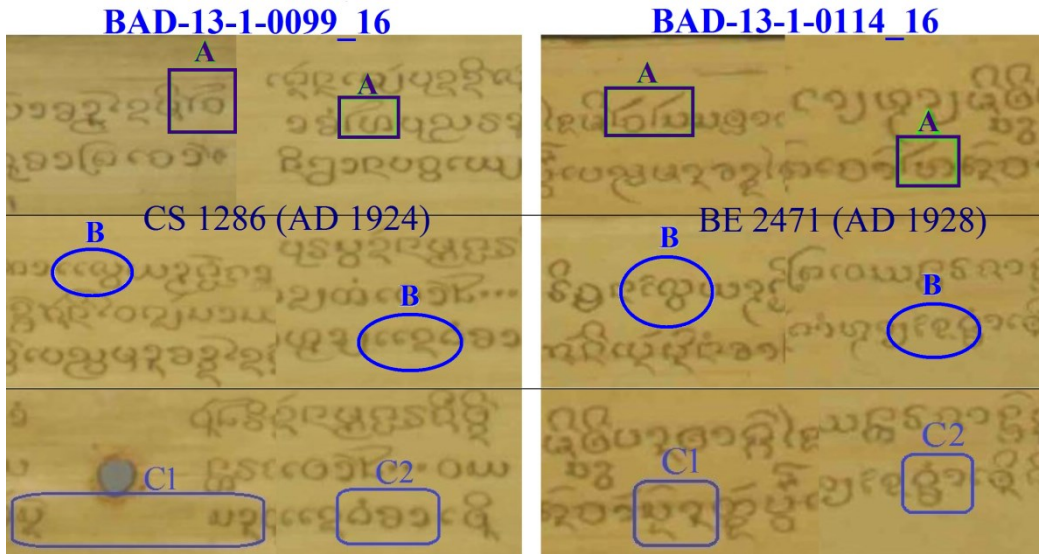
Figure 3.6: Samples of one consonant serving two functions



The words in the hexagon (line 1) consist of three syllables, *som – ma – na* (ສົມມະນາ), but only one *m* (ມ) appears in this word. Therefore, the consonant *m* functions as a final consonant in *som* and as an initial consonant in *ma*. The words in rounded rectangles (line 4 and 5) are combinations of two consonants. The first shape is a combination of the consonants *s* (ສ) and *m* (ມ), the second one of *s* (ສ) and *n* (ນ), and the last one of *kh* (ຮ) and *n* (ນ). As this phenomenon is not the focus of my study, it is mentioned here only to demonstrate the similar orthographic rules of Lao Buhan and Tham-Lao.

Although the manuscripts BAD-13-1-0099 and BAD-13-1-0114 were written in the Tham-Lao script, they also use similar techniques of word-shortening. In the colophons of these manuscripts, the word “*songsan*” which is derived from Pali, *samsāra* (cycle of birth), the vowel /ae/ and the rolling tail /ai/, which is known amongst the Lao as *sala ai mai muan* (ສະຫຼະໄອໄມ້ມ້ວນ), serve as good examples.

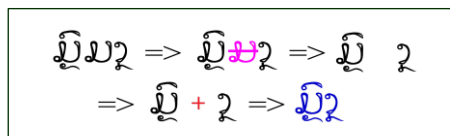
Figure 3.7: Samples of shortened words



There are three philological aspects to be noted in this image. First, the shapes of the vowel *ai mai muan* used in the colophons of manuscript nos. BAD-13-1-0099 and BAD-13-1-0114 are different from each other (A). The tail of A used in the former (A1), folding backwards and forwards, is longer than that of the A used in the latter (A2), which folds only backwards.

Second, the vowel */ae/* (B), which was used in writing the colophon of the former, retains a common or, perhaps, the original, shape (B1). By contrast, the scribe who wrote the colophon of the latter proposed another shape of */ae/* in his writing (B2). In fact, both B1 and B2 comprise two variants of the vowel */e/*. The two variants of */e/*, forming */ae/* of B1, were placed one after the other; whereas B2 contains one on top of the other.

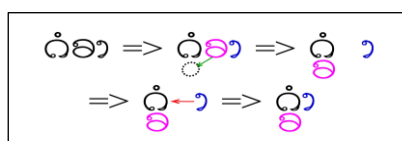
Third, as mentioned above, the latter scribe followed the way of writing ancient Lao. The word *songsan* (C1) – deriving from Pali, *saṃsāra* – was written with a common shape as that in the former colophon (C1-1). However, a special writing system for word-shortening was applied in writing the colophon of the latter (C1-2). Here, one consonant grapheme functions as two initial consonants in two different syllables: *song* and *san*. The characters in the box below show the process of the shortening of this word.





Interestingly, this word was written in the Tham-Lao script according to Lao orthography. In the colophons of both the former and the latter, the final consonant of the Lao or *tua sakot* /n/ was applied, not the /r/ of Pali origin. This can be understood to mean that some Buddhist scholars – or at least the scribes who wrote the colophons of these two versions of Vessantara Jataka – have their own way in writing the words derived from Pali. In other words, some of these words do not have a single spelling; rather their spelling depends on the users, and especially the writers. In consequence, one word could appear in various manuscripts in different forms. This is a striking feature evident in the composition of various manuscripts in Laos in ancient times.

Together with C1, an abbreviated word, *kham nyò* (C2) – probably another form of a shortened word – appears in the colophon of the manuscript BAD-13-1-0114 as well. Numerous shortened words following this rule can be summarised in two main classifications: 1) all the characters remain but some of these change their positions, and 2) some characters are missing and some of the remaining characters change their positions (further details of this matter will be presented below). Here, the feature of the *kham nyò* appears to be that all of the characters of each word remain after the merger of the two words into one unit, and some characters changed their positions. To understand the word-shortening process in this case, see the box below:



These matters mentioned above indicate that the Buddhist scholars of Luang Prabang have their own traditions for writing manuscripts. In essence, together with learning how to write with their teachers – or *hian nam phò kò nam khu* – they have developed their own method of writing as well. This may link to the traditional idea of being the owner of a particular type of short-sized palm-leaf manuscripts known in Lao by the term *nangsü kòm tang khon tang mi*. This can further be interpreted to mean that a short-sized palm-leaf manuscript is frequently written according to a specific orthography and based on the intentions of the people who will be using it.

However, the structures of the colophons of these two manuscripts are very much alike. The colophons might not have been copied from each other, but the scribes seemed to have been able to remember both the structure and specific expressions required for writing the colophons. In addition, anyone who wrote the colophon of any of these manuscripts might not know the details of the text of that manuscript, but he would have



been able to recite and write its title. The colophons of these manuscripts are summarized in the table below.

Table 3.6: Colophons of the last two fascicles/chapters of these two versions of Vessantara Jataka

		BAD-13-1-0099	BAD-13-1-0114
Era		Chulasakarat 1286	Buddhasakarat 2471
Lunar calendar	Year	<i>kap chai</i>	<i>poek nyi</i>
	Month	6 <sup>th</sup> month	2 <sup>nd</sup> month
	Fortnight	5 <sup>th</sup> waxing day	15 <sup>th</sup> waxing day
	Day	Thursday	[Thursday]
	Time	<i>nyam kông ngai</i>	<i>nyam kông ngai</i>
Corresponding to	Date	AD 1924, the 8 <sup>th</sup> of May, Thursday	AD 1928, the 27 <sup>th</sup> of December, Thursday
	Time	Between 7:30 and 9:00 am	Between 7:30 and 9:00 am
Donor		A group of donors, Phia Phaibunsavat, Nang Phia Butdi [his wife and their] children – living at Ban Pakham	A single donor, Sao Thee of Ban Thakhok
Title		<i>maha vessantara sadok</i> (Vessantara Jataka)	<i>lam phavetsantara sadok</i> (Vessantara Jataka)
Objective		to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand <i>vassa</i> (rains retreats)	to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand years
Wish		that this accrued merit will bring prosperity in this life and afterwards, to be free from the five traps of <i>māra</i> , and to reach <i>nibbāna</i>	to be free from the five traps of <i>māra</i> , and to reach <i>nibbāna</i>
Concluding statement (in Pali)		<i>Nibbāna paccayo hotu no</i>	<i>Nibbāna paccayo hotu</i>

Apart from the contents cited in the above table, some colophons of the Jataka indicate the scribes' knowledge directly. The colophon of manuscript BAD-13-1-0029, the chapter of Sunsok (Jujaka), contains this information. This manuscript was written in the Tham-Lü script, and in the Tai Lü language. Its colophon says:

ສະເດັດແລ້ວຍາມ[ກອງ]ແລງ ຂ້ອຍຝຶກ[ຂຽນ]ໃໝ່ ຕົວ[ໜັງສື]ບໍ່ງາມຈັກເມັດ ຢ່າຕິຕຽນຂ້ອຍ  
ແດ່ເນີ ແລ້ວແລ.

[The copying of this manuscript was] completed in the afternoon (between 13:30 and 15:00). I was a newly trained [writer and my] handwriting was not beautiful at all. Please do not criticize me. End.

Interestingly, the content of this colophon indicates the emotions of the person who wrote this manuscript. He knew that his handwriting was not stylistically beautiful. It was probably the first time that he used a stylus to make incisions into the palm leaves.

Therefore, he apologizes to his audience, or the users of this manuscript, for any mistakes he may have made while writing. It seems that this practice indicates a tradition of writing colophons within Tai Lü manuscript culture. Grabowsky and Apiradee (2003: 35) note, “Moreover, [that] even scribes with neat handwriting might apologize to the reader for their imperfect handwriting and possibly other shortcomings, such as the accidental omission or addition of letters, confusion of consonant and vowel graphemes, or the incorrect use of tone markers.” However, one point should be raised, namely that the scribe of manuscript BAD-13-1-0029 informs us that he was a newly trained scribe: why did he begin this practice by copying a chapter from such a long story? One possibility was that he might have been able to read the Tham-Lü script fluently and was thus frequently invited to preach this chapter. This, in turn, may have inspired him to copy this manuscript in order to contribute to the propagation of Buddhism.

Manuscript BAD-13-1-0115 is another version of the Vessantara Jataka with colophons directly indicating the scribes’ knowledge. This version was written in verse form in the Tham-Lao script. Like the other versions found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, this version, while seeming to have originally comprised of sixteen fascicles of palm leaves, only has seven fascicles remaining – fascicles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 13 – all of which contain a colophon. The colophons of fascicles 2, 6, and 13 contain some words which reflect the scribe’s experience in using language. See, for instance, the colophon of fascicle 2 below:

ຈຸນລະສັງກາດໄດ້ ໑໒໘໑ ຕົວ ປີກັດມິດ ເດືອນ ໗ ແຮມ ໑໑ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໓ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມທ່ຽງ ໝາຍ  
ມີ ເພຍໂຊອຸປະການ [ຜູ້ເປັນ]ສາມີ [ແລະ]ນາງເພຍຄຳຜົວ[ຜູ້ເປັນ]ພະລິຍາ [ຢູ່]ບ້ານຫຼັກຄຳ ພ້ອມ  
ລູກເຕົ້າທຸກຄົນ ມີສັດທາເຫຼື້ອມໃສເປັນອັນຍິ່ງ ຈິ່ງໄດ້ບໍລິຈາກຊັບສ້າງທັງສີມະຫາເທວດນີ້ ໄວ້ກັບສາ  
ສະໜາພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ ຂໍໃຫ້[ທັງສີນີ້]ຖາວອນສືບພະສາສະໜາຕໍ່ໄປ ຕາບເທົ່າ ໕໐໐໐ ພະວັດສາ.  
ໂດຍຈິດຕະເຈຕະນາກຸສົນອັນຜູ້ຂ້າໄດ້ສ້າງບຳເພັນທານນີ້ ຂໍຈິ່ງບັນດານເປັນຜົນສຳເລັດ ດັ່ງມະໂນລິດ  
ຄວາມປາຖະໜາ ກ່າວຄືວ່າພະປະລິນິພານ ເຊິ່ງເປັນພະນະຄອນອັນຍວດຍິ່ງກວ່ານະຄອນທັງປວງໃນ  
ໂຕໂລກນີ້ເທົ່ານັ້ນ.

It was Chulasakarat 1281, a *kat mot* year, in the seventh lunar month, on the eleventh waning day, a Wednesday (AD 24 June 1919, a Tuesday). [This fascicle of a palm-leaf manuscript] was copied completely in the middle of the day (between 10:00 and 12:00). Phia Sai Uppakan, husband, [and] Nang Phia Khamphio, wife, including all their children, living in Ban Lak Kham, were faithful [Buddhists]. [Therefore,] they donated their assets in order to make this version of Vessantara Jataka, in order to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand vassas. They wished for their generous charity to help them achieve their desires, i.e. Nibbāna, which is the most excellent city within the Three Worlds.

This colophon clearly states that the donors paid a person to copy this story for them. They might not have told the scribe to insert the word “*bòlichak sap* – ບໍລິຈາກຊັບ” (to donate property) into the colophon; the scribe possibly decided to he acknowledge this himself later. Traditionally, anyone asked to compose a manuscript for the purpose of a religious donation would read the note aloud to the owner of that donation after having finished the manuscript. The scribe of this colophon might have followed the traditional way of recording the donation. He wanted to emphasize that the donors provided the scribe with funding, and thereby to identify their legal ownership of the manuscript.

The scribe has also defined the relationship amongst the donors. He specifies a married couple, Phia Sai Uppakan and Nang Phia Khamphio, and their children. In other words, the scribe of this colophon intended to inform the reader that the donors of the manuscript was a family. He might have linked this to the traditional belief that a married couple and their children used to make merit together in their past life with the hope that they can be reunited in their next existence.

#### d) Passages and notes

Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s collection contains a number of manuscripts bearing various additional passages and notes. Here, we investigate the passages and notes left in some manuscripts belonging to the Jataka category. There is a short note on the second page of the last leaf of the seventh fascicle – the Jujaka Chapter – in the palm-leaf manuscript BAD-13-1-0114. The note was written in the Tham-Lan Na script (*tua müang*) in ballpoint pen with dark purple ink. See the figure below:

Figure 3.8: A note concerning the incompleteness of a Vessantara Jataka manuscript

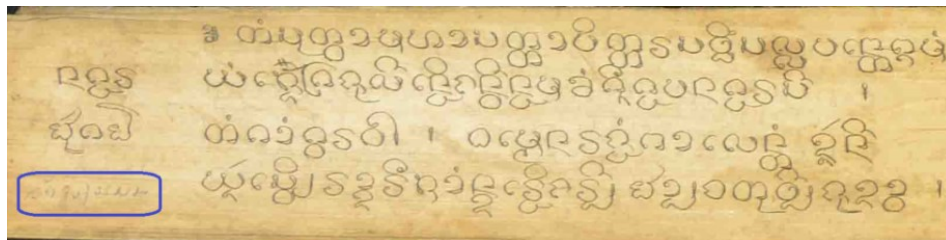


The note reads: *mahasat bò khop*, which translates to mean “the story of Vessantara is incomplete”. This note indicates both the scribe’s knowledge of the Lan Na script and the attention to detail paid by whomever wrote this note, most likely Sathu Nyai Khamchan. During his lifetime, he was one of the senior monks of Luang Prabang who regularly checked if the longer manuscripts were arranged correctly and complete. Manuscripts containing different versions of the same text posed a challenge to the reader

or user, especially if they were too long for a single palm-leaf fascicle. The difficulty of distinguishing between the different versions led to the fascicles getting mixed up in some cases. Therefore, when using a text taking up more than one fascicle, it is necessary to ensure that all fascicles come from the same version.

The sixteenth fascicle of manuscript BAD-13-1-0099 recounting the Vessantara Jataka – the chapter of Nakhòn – contains a further short note. This note, written in the modern Lao script, and in ballpoint pen, indicates the name of a place. The note appears clearly below the name of the chapter, *nakhòn phuk sip hok*, in the left margin of the first page of the first leaf. It reads “*vat siang maen*”, which is the name of the monastery of Ban Siang Maen (Siang Maen village). This village is located on the west bank of the Mekong, opposite the town of Luang Prabang.

Figure 3.9: A note indicating the location of the manuscript



The appearance of the monastery Vat Siang Maen in this fascicle could be interpreted in at least two ways: first, that this manuscript belonged to Vat Siang Maen; and, second, that a monk or a novice in this monastery was invited to preach this fascicle. Following tradition, the first occurrence is less probable, whereas the second is highly likely. In fact, the whole story of Prince Vessantara – comprising sixteen fascicles – must be preached consecutively during the festival of Vessantara, known in Laos as Bun Phavet. In this festival, each fascicle, containing one part of the story, is divided into two or three small sermons or *kan* (ກັນ) depending on the numbers of monks and novices invited to preach.

## 5. Anisong

### 5.1 Sòng, Salòng, and Anisong

Like other people in the world, Lao people are very proud of obtaining their desires. As Lao Buddhists, they often lend their ears to a sermonic speech as a positive act of merit making. Based on the demand for such sermons, Lao Buddhist thinkers – in effect, outstandingly-educated Lao monks – have tried their best to compile various types of sermonic texts to honour Buddhists merit-making. These texts are called *Anisong*. These

texts have been classified and named by the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme under the category of *Anisong/Salòng*.<sup>82</sup>

In comparison with other types of religious texts, *Anisong* texts are not long, however, their contents and structures are particular. However, another Lao word related to the name of the category of these texts should be mentioned, *sòng*. At first, this word might have been used to indicate this category, and *salòng* was then used as a variant form of *sòng*.<sup>83</sup> Later, Buddhist scholars changed the Pali word *ānisaṃsa* into the Lao word *Anisong*, meaning, in essence, the results of merit-making. However, this word might have become common and familiar in Laos before being used as the name of the category.

Furthermore, some texts, namely Pannyapalami (ປັນຍາປາລະມີ) (Pali: *paññāpāramī*), Unhatsavisai (ອຸນຫັດສະວິໄຊ) (Pali: *uṇhassavijaya*), and Thipphamon (ທິບພະມົນ) (Pali: *dibbamanta*), do not have *sòng*, *salòng*, or *Anisong* in front of their titles but, rather, have also been defined as *Anisong* texts. At first, these texts might have been compiled and recognized as texts in Pali, and additional texts in Lao were then inserted later on. Most insertions are explanations detailing how people could gain merit by listening to the sermons of these texts, donating to the temple, and worshipping the Triple Gem. Therefore, these texts were not defined as *Anisong* texts unless they are marked by additional insertions. It appears that these texts contain these insertions because Buddhists wanted to make the texts easier to understand.

Puzzingly, some of the texts with titles containing the word *Anisong* – The Eight *Anisong* (ອານິສິງແປດ), and The Five *Anisong* [and] eight *Matika* (ອານິສິງຫ້າ ມາຕິກາແປດ) – are not defined as *Anisong* texts. A bundle of two fascicles of eight *Anisong* kept in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode (BAD-13-1-0070) were found as loose manuscripts. They are a record of conversations between Maha Sariputta Thera, one of the Buddha’s outstanding disciples, and other monks during the Buddha’s lifetime. The Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts has listed eleven fascicles as five *Anisong* and eight *Matika*, and two of them – numbers 06 01 14 09 011 01 and 06 01 14 01 031 02 – belong to Vat Mai Suvanna Phumalam of Luang Prabang. The content of the first deals with tradition and ceremony, whereas the second relates to the monastic order.

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<sup>82</sup> For more details, see the Website of the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM): <http://www.laomanuscripts.net>. For the meaning of *Anisong* (Pali: *ānisaṃsa* “profit, merit, advantage”), see Davids and Stede 1925: 115.

<sup>83</sup> According to Maha Sila 2549 (2006): 118, Siviengkhek 2010: 471, and Preecha 1989: 758, the word “*salòng-ສະຫຼອງ*” may not be a variant shape of *sòng-ສອງ*, but it stands as one word. In other words, *salòng* is one meaning of *sòng*. Etymologically, “*salòng-ສະຫຼອງ*” might be derived from Khmer language, *chlòng*. The word “*chlòng*” became the Lao word by contracting “*chlòng*” yields “*chòng*” and replacing the initial consonant /ch/ with consonant /s/ – from this comes a new word “*sòng*”.

## 5.2 Structure and content

In general, the structure of any *Anisong* text is neither complicated nor long, and unfolds in a simple and straightforward manner. However, some *Anisong* texts kept in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode contain more elaborate structures and idiomatic expression. In other words, a group of *Anisong* texts found in his abode consist of two types of *Anisong* texts: traditionally compiled and new-fashioned. The introductory texts of two versions of the *Anisong* of "The Building of the sand stupa" (ສອງພະທາດຊາຍ) are good examples:

- (1) *Namotassatthu ekasmiṃ kira samaye sāvathiyam upanisāya jetavane* – followed by a bilingual (Pali-Lao) text or word-by-word translation *sādhavo* ຄູລາສັບປຸລິສະທັງຫຼາຍ *kira* ດັ່ງຈັກຮູ້ມານີ້... ( [Ladies and] gentlemen! [This time I would like to tell you all what] I heard ...).
- (2) *Vālukacetiṃ idam satthā pupphārāme viharanto pasenadikosalam ārabba kathesīti* – then followed by Lao text ວາລະນີ້ ຈັກສະແດງພະສັດທໍາມະເທສະໜາ ແກ່ພຸດທະບໍລິສັດທັງຫຼາຍ ... (This time I will preach the Buddhist Teachings to all Buddhists ...).

By examining the introductory texts above, some similarities and differences can be identified. Both (1) and (2) began with Pali words that date back to the Buddha's lifetime, concerning the words of the Lord Buddha himself. However, the location of the Buddha at that time differ between the two versions. In the first version, the Buddha stayed in the monastery of Jetavana, whereas the Puppharama was specified in the second version. Here, the different places might indicate that the Buddha repeatedly expounded upon the merit gained by building a sand stupa during his lifetime.

The difference between the two texts in Lao following the Pali phrase should not be overlooked either. In the former, the Lao is basically a word-by-word translation from Pali into Lao. It is understood that scholars did so in order to keep the language sacred according to traditional beliefs. In the case of the latter, the Lao text is plain and written in everyday language. The scholars might have hoped that this would increase their own favour by attracting a larger audience for their sermons; as a result, these new-fashioned versions of *Anisong* were compiled and developed.

There are traditionally four parts of an *Anisong* text. The first is the description of an event which took place during any Buddha's lifetime (A). Second, the catalyst for this event is described (B). Third, the desire of the owner or sponsor for others to obtain merit by their participation in the event is named (C). Finally, any remaining doubts about the event were explained by the Buddha (D).

Buddhists have found numerous means and various occasions of merit-making. Frequently, the means and occasion indicate a community and locality. An extraordinary compilation of *Anisong* texts to support and honour those things, such as the construction of monastic buildings and giving offerings to monks, is required. One of the *Anisong* texts recently discovered in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode (BAD-13-1-0206) is a good example of such an up-to-date *Anisong* text. This *Anisong* text was used to mark a birthday anniversary (ອານິສົງເຮັດບຸນວັນເກີດ). It was compiled with a typewriter in BE 2531 (AD 1988). Its structure and substance are different from that of the above mentioned versions. It begins with a Buddhist proverb – usually explainable by and linked with a certain event – as the requirement for the opening (A’), followed by the cause/context/condition of the preaching of the text (B’). Third, comes the insertion of Buddhist Teachings relating to this text, as required (C’), after which must appear one or more additional Buddhist proverbs relating specifically to the text (D’). Finally, the donor is bestowed with honour (E), and all donors and participants are blessed (F).

Many Lao Buddhists also engage in merit-making for the purpose of good luck (ເຮັດບຸນສືບຊາຕາ). However, the time for doing this is not fixed; rather it depends on their conditions/convenience. The compiler of this text might have learned about the desires of Lao Buddhists and compiled this text according to traditional beliefs. Words and expressions used in this text are clearly new-fashioned, thereby indicating modern conception of *Anisong* tests.

As noted, *Anisong* texts kept in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode can be categorized into two sub-groups according to their expressions and structure: traditional and new-fashioned. An examination of these texts reveals striking differences between these sub-groups which can readily be observed in the introductory texts and concluding remarks. The introductory text of an old version serves as an introduction when telling certain stories, whereas that of the new-fashioned version indicates that the title of the text being chanted will be explained. The difference between the two versions is related to language expressions both in Pali and Lao.

Table 3.7: Differences between old and new-fashioned expressions

Introductory texts		
Title	Old expression	New-fashioned expression
Khao Padap Din	<i>Namotassatthu sabbadānaṃ deyyadānaṃ yo janāṭīti</i> (then followed by <i>nissaya</i> text:) ສາທະໂວ ດູລາສັບປຸລິສະທັງຫຼາຍ ໂຍ ນະໂລ ອັນວ່າຄົນທັງຫຼາຍຝູງໃດ ເທິ ກໍ່ໃຫ້ຍັງໄທຍະທານຄືວ່າ ເຂົ້າປະດັບດິນເປັນທານ (Translation of <i>nissaya</i> text:) [Ladies and] gentlemen! [As I have heard,] all	<i>Eko duggatapuriso bhikkhuṃ bhikkhāya carantaṃ disvā tassa dānaṃ datvā sahasadevakaññā parivattasāṅkhātāṃ phalaṃ labhātīti</i> (then followed by Lao text:) ນະບັດນີ້ ອາຕະມາພາບຈັກໄດ້ວິສັດຊະນາໃນບິນດະປາຕະນິສັງສະ ກະຖາ ພັນນະນາເຖິງການໃສ່ບາດ (Translation of Lao text:) Now, I would

	people who [have made merit by] putting rice-balls into the Buddhist monks' alms-bowls	like to give an account of [merit by gaining of] putting rice-ball into the Buddhist monks' alms-bowls
Khao Sak	<i>Evammesuttam ekam samayam bhagavā sāvathiyam viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme bhosadavo</i> (then followed by <i>nissaya</i> text:) ດູລາສັບບູລິສະທັງຫຼາຍ ເອວັມເມຕຕັນຕິ ອາທິກັງ ນິທາເນວະຈະນັງ ຄໍາມິຕິນວ່າ ເອມັມເມສຸຕຕັງ ນີ້ສັກເປັນນິທານແຫ່ງສູດທັງຫຼາຍ (Translation of <i>nissaya</i> text:) [Ladies and] gentlemen! [As I have heard,] this <i>sutta</i> was one of all <i>suttas</i> .	<i>Tattha bhogāvahaṃ dānaṃ sīlamtu bhavasampadam so deti ida sattānaṃ visesena pakāsitanti</i> (then followed by Lao text:) ນະບັດນີ້ ຈັກສະແດງພະສັດທໍາມະເທສະໜາ ບັນລະຍາຍວິປາກະ ຜະລະແຫ່ງສະຫຼາກກະພັດຕະທານ ແກ່ທ່ານທັງຫຼາຍທີ່ມາ ພໍາເພງກຸສິນ (Translation of Lao text:) Now, I would like to tell you all of the result of giving offerings to Buddhist monks at the <i>salakabhatta</i> festival.
<b>Concluding remarks</b>		
Khao Padap Din	... ກິຍາກ່າວພະຍາພົມພິສານໃຫ້ເຂົ້າປະດັບດິນເປັນ ທານ ນິຕຖິຕັງ ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນ ຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ. (Translation:) ... The act of talking about King Phimphisan giving <i>khao padap din</i> , as an offering [to Buddhist monks] has reached its conclusion.	... ເຖິງເມືອງແກ້ວພະນົບພານໃນເມື່ອປາລະມິທານຂອງ ທ່ານເຕັມປຸງແລ້ວ. ເອວັງ ກໍມີດ້ວຍປະກາລະສະນີ. (Translation:) ... achieve <i>nibbāna</i> whenever your perfection of charity is complete. This is the conclusion [of this text].
Khao Sak	... ສະລາກະພັດຕານີສັງສັງ ນິຕຖິຕັງ ອັນວ່າກິຍາຈາ ອານິສິງສະຜະລະແຫ່ງບຸກຄະລະ ອັນໄດ້ໃຫ້ເຂົ້າສະຫຼາກ ກະພັດເປັນທານ ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ. (Translation:) ... The acting of talking about people's results of merit-making by giving <i>khao salakaphat</i> , as an offering [to Buddhist monks] has reached its conclusion.	... ສະຫຼາກກະພັດຕະທານມີຄຸນອານິສິງດັ່ງວິສັດຊະນາມາ ນີ້ ຂໍພຸດທະບໍລິສັດຈິງກະທໍາມະນະສິການໂດຍແຍບຄາຍ ເທົ່ນ. ເອວັງ ກໍມີດ້ວຍປະກາລະສະນີ. (Translation:) ... What I have just explained is the result of merit making by giving <i>khao salakaphat</i> as an offering [to Buddhist monks. I] ask Buddhists to use their discretion wisely. This is the conclusion[of this text].

### 5.3 Preservation and usage

Compared with the other religious texts, *Anisong* texts are used more frequently (BAD-13-1-0128, BAD-13-1-0157, BAD-13-1-0163). Their contents cover a variety of matters related to tradition, culture and society, so that they are more familiar to Buddhists. In practice, some monks and novices are able to remember and accurately preach some *Anisong* texts orally. As a result, when asked to write or copy such texts, they have the ability to do so without consulting the originals. In consequence, a number of various *Anisong* texts have been written repeatedly, but their details differ slightly from time to time. In other words, scribes may or may not have intended to make these texts different from each other. If the text has been written many times by the same scribe, the differences between them should be considered the main focus of revisions in the manuscript writing process.



The texts in this category are used rather frequently, and there are also a greater number of different versions. *Anisong* texts are usually used to teach a newly ordained monk or novice to read the Tham-Lao script. Therefore, their users need to keep them in a safe place, usually next to the place where they lay their head to sleep (ຫົວບ່ອນນອນ). In other words, these texts are not kept in manuscript cabinets/boxes/shelves, but instead are stored nearby for easy access during the next lesson. In addition, the commonly used manuscripts are not kept in a single place, but are, rather, stored somewhere easily within the user's reach. Such a manner of handling often results in the manuscripts becoming damaged, broken, or fragmented, and their physical conditions tend to be significantly worse than that of manuscripts kept in a cabinet.

Traditionally, reading variants of the Dhamma script is considered a foundational skill when learning to preach. This means that a student or disciple (ລູກສິດ) must be highly proficient in terms of both literacy and rhythm. Therefore, monks and novices – even if they are literate – have to continue to read the variants of the Dhamma script written on palm leaves, from one fascicle to another. In fact, learning to read the variants of the Dhamma script enables the monk or novice to discover new manuscripts and determine the handwriting of other scribes appearing in various forms. In brief, the more manuscripts a monk or novice can read, the more he can claim experience in preaching, because each particular manuscript is required to be read in the same voice in which it is preached. Therefore, the number of fascicles and manuscripts that a monk or novice is required to read in order to become a true master of the craft is unlimited. However, whenever an experienced teacher (*achan* ອາຈານ) observes that a student is skilful or has experience in both reading and preaching, he may ask a student to help him teach other monks and novices who have only recently been ordained and become monastic members.

Table 3.8: *Anisong* texts according to their expressions and writing materials

No	Titles related	Total	Old		New		Palm-leaf		Paper	
1	Sand stupa	4	2	50%	2	50%	4	100%	0	-
2	Pitaka/Nangsü	3	0	-	3	100%	1	33%	2	66%
3	Buddha image	3	0	-	3	100%	2	66%	1	33%
4	Pavilion	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
5	Bridge	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
6	Toilet	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
7	Bodhi tree base	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
8	Flower and candle	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
9	Folowing the Precepts	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
10	Listening to the sermon	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
11	Cremating	3	0	-	3	100%	1	33%	2	66%
12	Vessantara Jataka	2	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%

13	Khao Padap Din	3	1	33%	2	66%	2	66%	1	33%
14	Kathina	3	1	33%	2	66%	2	66%	1	33%
15	Pha Ap Nam Fon	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
16	Pamsukula	1	0	-	1	100%	1	100%	0	-
17	Civāra	3	0	-	3	100%	1	33%	2	66%
18	Ordination	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
19	Khao Pan Kòn	2	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%	0	-
20	Paet Mūn	1	1	100%	0	-	1	100%	0	-
21	Flag	1	0	-	1	100%	1	100%	0	-
22	Khao Sak	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
23	Sangha-dāna	2	0	-	2	100%	1	50%	1	50%
24	Khao Chi	2	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%
25	Sabba-dāna	2	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%
26	Painting the Buddha status with golden colour	1	0	-	1	100%	1	100%	0	-
27	Acting a performance of merit-making to remark Birthday anniversary	1	0	-	1	100%	1	100%	0	-
		<b>57</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>48</b>		<b>34</b>		<b>23</b>	

This table shows that 15.7 percent of all *Anisong* texts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were compiled according to old expressions, whereas the number of new texts constitute 84.2 percent. 59.6 percent were incised or typed on palm leaves, and 40.3 percent were written on paper. This might indicate that Lao Buddhists are still happy to carry on preserving traditional ways of sponsoring palm-leaf manuscripts. They highly value the monasteries containing images of the Buddha, monks and novices, monastic buildings, and palm-leaf manuscripts. Furthermore, palm-leaf manuscripts not only function as container of texts detailing the Buddha's teachings, but they are also representations of well-known monasteries.

## 6. Buddhist chronicle

As mentioned in Chapter 2, 33 manuscripts are classified as Buddhist chronicles (see Table 2.6). Of them, the manuscripts BAD-13-1-0222 entitled *Pha Uppakhut Phap Phanya Man* ("Monk Uppakhut defeats the king of *māra*"), BAD-13-1-0307 entitled *Phūn Pha Chao Sip Pha-ong Phuk Sòng* ("The legend of the ten Buddhas", vol. 2), BAD-13-1-0314 entitled *Kap Phachao Nipphan* ("A poetic composition on the Buddha's passing"), BAD-13-1-0317 entitled *Phūn Phachao Sip Pha-ong Phuk Ton* ("The legend of the ten Buddhas", vol. 1), and BAD-13-1-0232 entitled *Tamnan Dòi Tung* ("The chronicle of Dòi Tung Mountain") are explored below.

### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0222

This manuscript, entitled *Pha Upakhut Phap Phanya Man* (“Monk Upakhut defeats the king of *māra*”), comprises 27 palm-leaf folios measuring 55 cm in length and 5.5 cm in width, and one additional blank leaf. The first two palm leaves of this manuscript contain an insertion written in modern Lao script in ballpoint pen with blue ink, three columns and five lines on each page, which pertains to historical events (see Chapter 4 for further details). The palm leaves were attached to the manuscript because of the insertion and the text related to the construction of stupas (*that* - ທາດ). The text was written in the Tham-Lao script, four lines on each page, and its pagination follows the orthographic system of Sanskrit. This manuscript also contains some corrections in blue ink, which were probably made by a user later on.

As noted in Chapter 2, Buddhism was introduced into Laos by the initiatives of King Ashoka in ancient India (c. BC 269–232). The content of this manuscript details some events that supposedly took place during the reign of King Ashoka. The story narrates that at this time there was a novice named Nigoda who possessed great ability and courage. He converted the king to Buddhism. To demonstrate his firm faith in Buddhism, the king initiated the building of 84,000 stupas. After the completion of the stupas, a celebratory festival was held. Nevertheless, the king was afraid that the *māra* or Obstructor of Merit<sup>84</sup> would bring disorder to the festival. To be safe, the king asked Novice Nigoda to invite Monk Uppakhut, who supposedly lived under the ocean, to protect the festival from the wrath of *māra*.

When it was time for the festival, the *māra* came to the site and caused much trouble, ruining the celebrations. In response, Monk Uppakhut used his supernatural powers many times to try to drive the *māra* away from the festival, but he was unable to do so. It seemed that the *māra* intended to trouble the people in petpetuity, so Monk Uppakhut finally tied him up with a sacred rope. The *māra* was unable to throw off his shackles and much suffering was inflicted upon him. Upon learning of this, Monk Uppakhut preached the teachings of the Buddha to him, after which the *māra* that promised he would no longer commit sins. After securing this pledge, the monk released the *māra* from his captivity.

This a traditionally-held belief in Laos that continues to the present day. It is most viable in practice during the festival of Bun Phavet. During the early morning of the first day of the festival, a monk and some lay people will carry an alms bowl, an umbrella, a monk’s robe and some offerings to a well or river, where they then invite Monk Uppakhut

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<sup>84</sup> For more details about the meaning of *māra*, see Davids and Stede (1925:558–559).

to protect the people participating in the festival from. A return procession must also be held after the festival to guide Monk Uppakhut's spirit back to his resting place.

Aside from the content above, manuscript BAD-13-1-0222 has two leaves containing an additional text. The insertion was written in modern Lao script in a blue ballpoint pen and serves as an introduction to the main text. The added text notes religious events during the time of King Ashoka and the introduction of Buddhism to Laos. The added text also briefly details that the kings of the Lan Xang kingdom initiated the introduction of Buddhism into the kingdom by building many stupas in the town of Luang Prabang. King Fa Ngum, for instance, sent his envoys to the kingdom of Khmer to ask for Buddhism to be spread throughout Lan Xang. Subsequently, the Pha Bang statue, which supposedly contained five pieces of the Buddha's relics, was transferred to Lan Xang as well. Later on, King Visun built Mak Mo Stupa in Vat Visun, King Setthathilat built Pha That Stupa in Vat That, King Anurut built Chòm Si Stupa at the top of Phu Si Mountain, and King Manthatulat built That Luang in Vat That Luang (some of these accounts relating to historical events are discussed further in Chapter 4). The added text further demonstrates that organizing the annual That Luang festival is a good way of preserving traditional customs.

This manuscript has three colophons. The first colophon was written on the first leaf before the beginning of the text and the other two were written on two leaves after its conclusion. It seems that the first colophon is similar to a common note (A), whereas the other two were written according to the typical structure of a colophon (B and C). See the differences between A and B below:

A: ພະວິລະຈິດຕະເຖລະ ຄຳຈັນ ເຈົ້າວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ ສ້າງເມື່ອວັນອາທິດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປີ ຮວາຍສີ ພ.ສ. ໒໔໑໙ ໃນມື້ອາຍຸຄົບ ໕໖ ປີ ເພື່ອອຸທິດກຸສົນທານາງຄຳອວນຜູ້ເປັນເອື້ອຍ.

Pha Vichitta Thera Khamchan, an abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam, made [this manuscript] on Sunday, the tenth day of the waxing moon, in the eleventh lunar month, a *hwai si* year, BE 2519 (AD 3 October 1976). [I made this manuscript] on the day my 56<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to dedicate the acquired merit to [my] older sister, Mrs. Kham Uan.

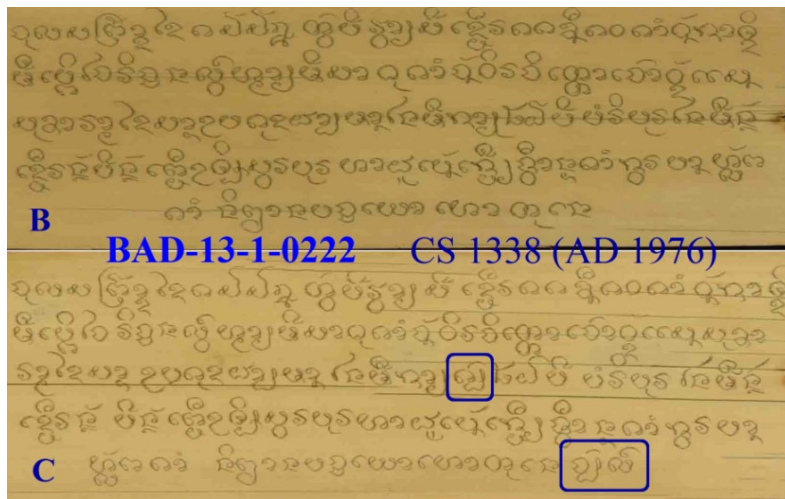
B: ຈຸນລະສັງກາດໄດ້ ໑໓໓໘ ຕົວ ປີຮວາຍສີ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ວັນອາທິດ ມື້ເປີກໄຈ້ ລິດຈະນາ ແລ້ວ ໝາຍມີ ສາທຸ ຄຳຈັນ ວິລະຈິດໂຕ ເຈົ້າວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ ໄດ້ສ້າງອຸປະປະຄຸດຜາບມານ ໃນ ມື້ອາຍຸຄົບ ໕໖ ປີບໍລິບູນ ໃນມື້ນັ້ນເດືອນນັ້ນປີນັ້ນ ເພື່ອອຸທິດສ່ວນບຸນທາຜູ້ເປັນເອື້ອຍຊື່ວ່າ ນາງ ຄຳອວນບ້ານຫຼັກຄຳ. ນິພພານະ ປັຈຈະໂຍ ໂຫຕຸ ໂນ.

In Chulasakarat 1338, a *hwai si* year, in the eleventh lunar month, on the tenth day of the waxing moon, Sunday, a *poek chai* day (AD 3 October 1976), [this

manuscript was] completed. [I,] Sathu Khamchan Viracitto, an abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam, made [this manuscript] of Uppakhut defeating *māra* on the day of my 56<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to dedicate the acquired merit to [my] older sister, Mrs. Kham Uan of Ban Lak Kham (Village). *Nibbāna paccayo hotu no* (May our acquired merit bring us to *nibbāna*).

The contents of B and C are the same, except for two words in rounded rectangles (see figure 3.10) – စိပ် *khop* (complete, full) and စိပ်လေ *chop lae* (complete or “the end”) – are missing in B. Not only do the colophons have the same content, but the handwriting of these colophons is very similar to each other as well. They might have been written by the same person, probably Sathu Nyai Khamchan, who appears in these colophons as the initiator or “maker” (ဗုဒ္ဓိဗျာဓိ). He might first have intended to write these colophons for two fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the same title and content, namely Upakhut Phap Man. However, he may not have found the manuscript that he wanted so these colophons – both B and C – were attached to manuscript BAD-13-1-0222. Colophon C, conversely, seems to have been written to make B more understandable, as the word indicating the occasion of manuscript making – စိပ် – is missing in B.

Figure 3.10: One manuscript containing two colophons with the same content



Colophons A, B and C all demonstrate that Sathu Nyai Kamchan, being a monk and younger brother, made merit by producing manuscripts. This suggests that the act of merit-making and dedicating acquired merit to the deceased are suitable acts for the living, not only for laypeople, but also for ordained ones. Furthermore, Lao devotees in Buddhism believe that they can acquire merit by participating in a performance of merit-making; as such, when a person organizes such a performance his/her relatives and friends will usually

be present at the site to benefit as well. Not only do some of them participate in the ceremonies, but they are also happy to help out with the organization of the event.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0307**

This manuscript entitled *Phün Pha Chao Sip Pha-ong Phuk Sòng* (The legend of the ten Buddhas, vol. 2) consists of 23 palm leaves that measure 54.5 cm in length and 4.3 cm in width. The text is written in the Tham-Lao script, with four lines on each page, and its pagination follow the orthographic system of Sanskrit. The manuscript also contains some corrections.

The text of this manuscript deals with events that took place during the Buddha's lifetime. Specifically, the Buddha once preached his teachings to Monk Sariputta and several other monks. He foretold that after he passed away his teachings would endure for 5000 years. After that, human beings will not follow his teachings any longer and fail to respect to each other – just like animals. At the same time, their lifetimes will gradually become shorter, and they will suffer from famine and various fatal diseases. Once human beings have become good again and follow the *sintham* (moral standard), a *pha phothisat* (Pali: *bodhisatta*) will be born into this world.

This manuscript has a colophon that indicates a certain desire of its producer. Some notes left in some of the blank leaves, moreover, reveal a variety of issues related to monastic administration and the ways in which monks in different monasteries communicate with each other. In addition, the person who wrote the colophon seems to have been able to tell the time according to the traditional astrological system. The colophon reads:

ຈຸນລະສັງກາດລາຊະໄດ້ ໑໒໕໗ ຕົວ ປີຮັບມິດ ເດືອນ ໑໒ ແຮມ ໖ ຄ່ຳ ມີກັດມິດ ວັນ ໖ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວ  
ຍາມຕູດຊ້າຍເຂົ້າຫາກອງແລງ ໝາຍມີ ສັງຄະລາຊາສິດທິປັນຍາ ມີໃຈໃສສັດທາເປັນອັນຍິ່ງຈິ່ງໄດ້  
ສ້າງທ້ອນ ພິນພະເຈົ້າ ໑໐ ອົງ ໄວ້ກັບສາສະໜາ ຂໍໃຫ້ຜູ້ຂ້າໄດ້ພົບ ພະສາສະໜາພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ  
ອະລິຍະເມດໂຕ ອັນຈັກມາພາຍໜ້າ ຂໍໃຫ້ໄດ້ເຂົ້າສູ່ວຽງແກ້ວນິລະພານ ຂໍໃຫ້ຜູ້ຂ້າໄດ້ເຖິງອໍລະຫັນໃນ  
ສຳນັກພະເຈົ້າອະລິຍະເມດໂຕເຈົ້າ ກໍຂາເທົ້ນ ນິພພານະ ປັ[ຈຈະໂຍ] ໂຫຕຸ ໂນ ທຸວັງ ໒.

It was Chulasakarat 1257, a *hap mot* year, in the twelfth lunar month, on the sixth day of the waning moon, a *puek chai* day, the sixth day of the week, (AD 3 November 1895, a Friday), [This manuscript was] completed around 1:30 p.m. Sanghalasa Sitthipannya, a true believer in Buddhism, made this manuscript recording the story of the ten Buddhas. I myself hope to be born and attain Arahattaship in the time of Ariyametteyya (the next Buddha) and to acquire [merit] bringing me to achieve *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna paccayo hotu no dhuvam dhuvam* (We

wish for our acquired merit to lead us to *nibbāna*. [The more times we make merit the more we still desire this] consistently).

Compared with other scribes, the scribe who wrote this colophon detailed the time more specifically. He wrote that this manuscript was completely finished a few minutes between the period of *nyam tut sai* (12:00–13:30) and *nyam kòng laeng* (13:30–15:00). The colophon says that this manuscript was written in AD 1895 so it is possible that a clock might be used for determining the exact time. At the time the scribe finished his work, a clock, probably the one used in his community, might have displayed 1:30 pm, so that he was able to record this modern measure of time within the traditional form.

Five notes were also added to this manuscript later. These can be found on blank leaves at the end of the manuscript and illustrate how monks, novices and nuns were administrated, as well as how information was transmitted. The notes are as follows: “ພ່ອມ ເຜີ້ກ ວັດກີ້ວບໍ່ ມີ້ ໑໓ [ຄໍ່າ] ຂໍນິມົນແຕ່ເຊົ້າ ຂະນ້ອຍ” (“Mòm (monk) Lek of Vat Kio Pò invited to come early in the morning on the thirteenth day of the lunar month” (A)); “ຈົວປານ[ວັດ]ປ່າສັງວ [ແມ່ນ] ລູກສາວຢອງ” (“Chua (novice) Pan of Vat Pa Siao is a son of Mrs Yòng” (B)); “ພ່ອມມ້າວ [ວັດ] ຫາດສັງວ ຂໍນິມົນແຕ່ເຊົ້າມີ້ ໑໓ [ຄໍ່າ]” (“Mòm Mao of Vat Hat Siao invited to come early in the morning on the thirteenth day of the lunar month” (C)); “ຈົວເພັງ[ວັດ]ຊຽງທອງ [ຢູ່]ກະດິພ່ອມສີ [ແມ່ນ]ລູກສິນະລະຄູດ” (“Chua Pheng of Vat Xiang Thòng, living at the abode of Mòn Si, is a son of Sinalakhut” (D)); and “ທຸເບັງ ວັດກີ້ວບໍ່ ຂໍນິມົນແຕ່ເຊົ້າ ຂະນ້ອຍມີ້ ໑໓ [ຄໍ່າ]” “[Sa]thu Beng of Vat Kio Pò invited to come early in the morning on the thirteenth day of lunar month” (E)).

The above notes can be classified in two groups: invitations (A, C, and E) and individual information (B and D). The date and time mentioned in A, C and E are the same, and the people who were invited were monks. They might have been invited to participate in a religious ceremony or festival (probably held at Vat Saen Sukharam). The question is: why are the leaves containing invitations attached to this manuscript? At first, the leaves might have been sent to the monks who were invited. Then, on the day of appointment, they brought the leaves to introduce themselves to the person who had invited them. The leaves might have been attached to the manuscript later on, probably at the time that manuscripts were traditionally collected, probably in late 2007, after Sathu Nyai Khamchan passed away.

B and D provide instructions for the administration of the Sangha of Luang Prabang, in particular how to train and educate novices. In practice, the basic task of novices, similar to that of monks, is to propagate Buddhism. Novices can be reordained as monks when reach twenty years old of age if they exhibit moral behaviour as well as abilities in chanting and preaching. Thus, senior monks must pay much attention to the education and behaviour of novices. One way to ensure that novices follow monastic regulations is the co-operation

between the abbot of the monastery in which the novices live and their parents. It is not unusual that B and D contain the names of the mother and father of two novices.

D gives a more specified description compared to B. D says that Novice Pheng of Vat Xiang Thòng, then residing at the abode of Mòm Si, is the son of a man called Sinalakhut. At the time that this note was recorded there may have been more than one novice named Pheng, and that there were many abodes in Vat Xiang Thòng. In addition, the novices, whose names were Pheng, might have lived in separate abodes. Therefore, the monk took the note, probably the abbot of a monastery, specified that the novice was named Pheng and lived at the abode of Mòm Si. Before the introduction of western culture to Laos, such was the way of individual identification, as Lao people had no family names; that is to say, the name of their residence was required to identify a specific individual as well. If that person was a layperson, then his/her name were followed by the name of his/her village, whereas with the names of a monks and novices, and probably nuns, were followed by the name of their monastery.

#### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0314**

This manuscript, entitled *Kap Phachao Nipphan* (“Poetic composition on the Buddha’s passing”), comprises 17 palm leaves which measure 59.5 cm in length and 5 cm in width. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines on each page. Both the orthographic system of Sanskrit and numbers appear in this manuscript for counting the leaves.

The text of this manuscript composed in verse, deals with the Buddha’s teachings by emphasizing the importance of people following precepts and giving alms. The text describes the life of Crown Prince Siddhattha in the period just before the Buddha attained full enlightenment, including his missions during the 45 years of his enlightenment, and numerous other occurrences after his passing. The text also has linguistic and literary value. Not only did the scribe know the story of the Buddha, he was also skilled in the use of meter. Furthermore, he used common words in his work to facilitate a higher level of understanding among his audiences.

The poetic meter of *kap* is one of its significant features. The text of manuscript BAD-13-1-0314 was composed in *kap chet* (ກາບເຈັດ), a type of seven-syllable verse. As the name indicates, the number seven is important in that it specifies the number of syllables in each line or *vak* (ວັກ), with the first three words serving as the front part (ຕອນໜ້າ) and the last four words functioning as the back half (ຕອນູ້ງ). However, the means of calculation of words used in verse is different from those used in prose, so that is called *bat kham*



(ບາດຄໍາ). A *bat kham* is commonly just one word, but it sometimes comprises two (see the front part of line 10 in table 3.9 below).

There are two types of verse rhyme (ສໍາຜັດ): vowel rhyme (ສໍາຜັດສະຫຼະ) and consonant rhyme (ສໍາຜັດພະຍັນຊະນະ). Vowel rhyme may appear within a single line, known as inner rhyme (ສໍາຜັດໃນ), or between two different lines, external rhyme (ສໍາຜັດນອກ). Consonant rhyme appears much more frequently in the form of inner rhyme. The *kap chet* – like other forms of Lao poetic meter – is always composed according to the rhyming schemes for both vowel and consonant rhyme. The rhyming scheme for this verse form is actually relatively uncomplicated. The last word of the first line has to rhyme with any word in the front part of the second line; the last word of the second line must rhyme with any word in the front part of the third line; the last word of the third line needs to rhyme with any word in the front part of in the fourth line; and continuing on in this fashion until the end. See table 3.9 below (each pair of numeral, such as 1–1, 2–2, and 3–3 among others, indicating the rhyme in a stanza):

Table 3.9: Excerpt from BAD-13-1-0314 in *kap chet*

Line	Lao script		Romanization	
	Front hemistich	Back hemistich	Front hemistich	Back hemistich
1	ມານກະຊັງ	ຫິນຫວາຍຮ້ອງໄຫ້ <sup>໑</sup>	man ka-sang	hon hwuai hòng hai <sup>1</sup>
2	ມານຈຶ່ງໄດ້ <sup>໑</sup>	ຂາບໄຫວ້ສັບພັນຍູ <sup>໒</sup>	man chüng dai <sup>1</sup>	khap vai sap-phan-nyu <sup>2</sup>
3	ຂໍກູນາ	ເມດຕາອິດໂທດ <sup>໓</sup>	khò ku <sup>2</sup> -na	met-ta ot thot <sup>3</sup>
4	ໂຜດຂ້າມ້ອຍ	ຄົນຖ່ອຍພະການ <sup>໔</sup>	phot <sup>3</sup> kha-nòi	khon thòi pha-kan <sup>4</sup>
5	ບຸນສົມພານ <sup>໔</sup>	ເຈົ້າກູແກ່ກ້າ <sup>໔</sup>	bun som-phan <sup>4</sup>	chao ku kae ka <sup>5</sup>
6	ຫ້ອຍບໍ່ຊ້າ <sup>໔</sup>	ມານເລົ່າເລີຍລາ <sup>໖</sup>	nòi bò sa <sup>5</sup>	man lao loei la <sup>6</sup>
7	ພາ <sup>໖</sup> ລິພົນ	ຄົນເມືອຮອດພ້າ <sup>໗</sup>	pha <sup>6</sup> li-phon	khün müa hòt fa <sup>7</sup>
8	ສະເພາະໜ້າ <sup>໗</sup>	ຕໍ່ຕູດສີດາ <sup>໘</sup>	sa-phò na <sup>7</sup>	tò tut-si-da <sup>8</sup>
9	ພາຍລຸນມາ <sup>໘</sup>	ເກີດເປັນອົງແກ້ວ <sup>໙</sup>	phai lun ma <sup>8</sup>	koet pen ong kao <sup>9</sup>
10	ເຈົ້າຜ່ານແຜ້ວ <sup>໙</sup> ຜາບແພ້	ຜູງໝູ່ພົນມານ	chao phan phaeo <sup>9</sup> phap phae	fung mu phon man
Line	Translation			
	Front hemistich	Back hemistich		
1	<i>Māra</i> was shocked,	he struggled to get free and cried loudly.		
2	Then, he	prostrated himself in front of the Buddha		
3	to request	loving-kindness and forgiveness.		
4	“Please pity me, [the <i>māra</i> requested to be forgiven]	“[I am] wretchedly bad with wickedness.”,		
5	“[I, now, know that] the acquired merit	[the <i>māra</i> continued his words].		
6	After that	of the Buddha is absolutely powerful.”, [the <i>māra</i> validated the Buddha’s acquired merit.]		
		the <i>māra</i> bid farewell and left.		

7	He led his men	up through the air
8	moving toward	the <i>tusita</i> [heaven.]
9	Much later,	he was reborn as a virtuous person.
10	The Buddha completely defeated	all armies of the <i>māra</i> .

This table shows that the vowel rhyme is very frequently used in external rhyme. The table further demonstrates that the last word of any back hemistich rhymes mostly with the last word of the front hemistich in the next line, 55.5% of the time with the first and 22.2% each with the second and third syllables. This suggests that the standing meter of the rhyme between two poetic lines is the last word of any back hemistich, and the last word of the front hemistich of the next line has to be made of the same vowel. However, infrequently used rhyme, which is the last word of the back hemistich of that line, rhymes with the first or the second words of the front hemistich in the next line, should be considered as alternative prosody of the rhyme of this type of verse. This metrical structure seems to be used for making the external rhyme more flexible, so the compiler has many ways to create a rhyme.

The table also demonstrates that most of the final syllables of each hemistich of each line consist of long vowels. Three front parts of three lines end with syllables that contain short vowels (30%), whereas long vowels are applied for rhyming seven of the final syllables of the remaining parts and lines (70%). Only one back part of one line ends with a word containing a short vowel (10%), whereas the final syllables of the remaining parts and lines are made of long vowels (90%). Furthermore, only one back part ends with a dead syllable (ພະຍາງຕາຍ), a syllable that cannot change its tone (5%), whereas the remaining parts end with live syllables (ພະຍາງເັນ) or syllables that can change their tone (95%). This also suggests that long vowels and live syllables are more frequently used as the last unit of the part and line of the verse.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0317**

This manuscript, entitled *Phūn Phachao Sip Pha-ong Phuk Ton* (“The legend of the ten Buddhas,” vol. 1), comprises 30 palm leaves that measure 54.5 cm in length and 4.5 cm in width. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines on each page. Traditional pagination – that is, the orthographic system of Sanskrit – is used in this manuscript.

The text of this manuscript is similar to that of manuscript BAD-13-1-0314 discussed above. It is presented here to demonstrate that some palm-leaf manuscripts are just fascicles comprising leaves of the same sizes but possessing different content. The leaves

might have been separated from different fascicles and then later attached together. This is commonplace when a large number of manuscripts are collected after the death of the owner of that collection as per tradition. Manuscript BAD-13-1-0314 is a good example of this. Three remarks shall be presented to highlight that this manuscript is not an original, but a newly arranged fascicle of palm leaves of the same size which originate from different manuscripts.

First, following the tradition of the scribes within their manuscript culture, the left margin of the recto page of the first leaf contains the title of the text. The left margin of the verso page of the first leaf contains the pagination, which begins with *ca*. Nevertheless, the pagination of the next leaves do not continue in the correct order from that of the first leaf – in effect, *cā*, *ci*, *cī*, and so forth – instead being ordered *kham*, *khah*, *ga*, etcetra. This is clearly a mistake, as, according to the alphabetical order of Sanskrit, the consonant /*c*/ comes after the consonant /*kh*/ (see section 3.5 Manuscript Production in Chapter 2). Therefore, the first leaf of this manuscript might have been separated from the other manuscripts and attached to this manuscript later.

Second, the title of the text mentioned in the concluding remark is different from the one mentioned in the left margin on the first page of the first leaf. The concluding remark reads, “ກີຍາອັນແກ້ໄຂຍັງກຸສະລະທຳ ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ.” which means “this explanation of the Kusalatham” (Pali: *kusala – dhamma*) is complete. Kusalatham is not the title written in the left margin on the folio 1 recto, but rather *Phūn Phachao Sip Phalong Phuk Ton*. Furthermore, the text of Kusalatham has been placed into the classification of didactics, not of Buddhist chronicles.

Third, this manuscript has two colophons which have a number of similarities and differences to note. Like the first leaf of this manuscript, the leaves containing colophons might not have originally been written for it, but instead separated from other manuscripts and attached to it later on. Furthermore, the handwriting and orthography of the colophons are different from one another, as well as from those found in the main text as well. The sub-script of the consonant /*n*/ in the Tham-Lü script was occasionally applied in the writing of Colophon 2, whereas the orthography of Colophon 1 followed that of the orthography of the Tham-Lao script. The details of this comparison can be seen more clearly in the table below.

Table 3.10: Differences and similarities of the colophons of manuscript BAD-13-1-0317

		Colophon 1	Colophon 2
Era		CS 1206	CS 1226
Lunar calendar	Year	<i>kap si</i>	<i>kap si</i> <sup>85</sup>
	Month	4 <sup>th</sup> month	2 <sup>nd</sup> month
	Fortnight	6 <sup>th</sup> waning day	10 <sup>th</sup> waning day
	Day of the week	Not mentioned	<i>van [...]</i>
	Zodiac day	<i>tao chai</i>	Not mentioned
	Corresponding to	AD 1845, February 27, Thursday	AD 1865, January 21, Saturday
Time		<i>nyam thae kai thiang</i> (09:00 – 10:30 am)	<i>nyam kòng ngai</i> (07:30 – 09:00 am)
Initiator	Scribe	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Donor	A single donor, Saensulin [of] Huaphon [village].	A group of donors, Mrs Saensulin, her children, and relatives.
Title		<i>Thammapitaka</i>	<i>Samatsongsan</i>
Objective		to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand <i>vassa</i> (rains-retreats)	to ensure the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand <i>vassa</i> (rains-retreats)
Desire		for the fulfilment of all desires	for the fulfilment of all desires
Concluding words (in Pali)		<i>Nibbāna paccayo hontu no dhuvam dhuvam</i>	<i>Nibbāna paccayo hontu no dhuvam dhuvam</i>

This table shows that the colophons of this manuscript contain different titles, which suggests that two leaves, containing one colophon each, were separated from two particular manuscripts. In other words, they were attached to manuscript BAD-13-1-0317 later on. Furthermore, the title of Colophon 1 seems not to be a specific title but, rather, a common representation of any title relating to the Buddha’s teachings.

### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0232

This manuscript, entitled *Tamnan Dòì Tung*<sup>86</sup> (“The Chronicle of Dòì Tung Mountain”), comprises 33 palm leaves that measure 55 cm in length and 5.3 cm in width. The text was written in a mix of the Tham-Lü and Tham-Lao scripts, with four lines on each page and

<sup>85</sup> If the era 1226 were correct, the year of the 60-year-cycle would be *kap chai*, not *kap si*. In contrast, if the cyclic year, *kap si*, were correct, the era would be the same as that mentioned in Colophon 1, and the date and month would correspond to 21 January, a Saturday. For more detail about names in the zodiac and astrological traditions of the Lao please see Table 2.3, the cyclic year (Years and Days of the Animal) in Chapter 2. In regard to the conversion of Southeast Asian calendars to Gregorian dates, please see Eade, John Christopher 1995. *The Calendrical Systems of Mainland Southeast Asia*, E. J. Brill, Leiden.

<sup>86</sup> Dòì Tung, a mountain namely Tung, is located in Chiang Rai province of Thailand. There is a Buddhist monastery built on the top of the mountain.

its pagination following the orthographic system of Sanskrit. This manuscript contains some corrections in blue ink, which were probably made later by a user.

The text of this manuscript deals with subject matters from the time of the Buddha. At the time when the Buddha was alive, there were three mountains located next to each other. The first one was called the mountain of Tam, located to the north; the second was called the mountain of Nya Chao, located in the middle; and the last one was called the mountain of Pu Chao, located to the south. From a distance, these mountains resemble three blocks arranged to support cooking with a pot over a fire (ກ້ອນເສົ້າ).

At these mountains, there was a couple of Minlakkhu (Pali: *milakkha* “a barbarian, foreigner, outcaste, hillman”): Pu Chao Lao Chok and his wife Nya Chao Lao Chok. The couple had three sons, named Lava Kumpho, Lava Thasala Vakanya, and Lava Khantho. They naturally earned their living by plantation, and at that time there was communication between the indigenous people and the newly arrived Tai people. The Tai came to the feet of the mountains and sold goods such as salt, clothes, and food. The Minlakkhu also came down from their houses to sell bamboo shoots and agricultural products such as ash pumpkin, luffa, and sesame. Much later, the region became more heavily settled and the communities developed into villages and cities (ເປັນບ້ານເປັນເມືອງ). The story also tells how the Buddha and his disciples once traveled through the air to the region, stopping to take a rest at Pu Chao Mountain.

The colophon of this manuscript is quite long. It takes up four full lines on one page of a leaf. It reads: “ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ພັນ ໒ ຮ້ອຍຊາວ ໔ ຕົວ ປີເຕົ້າເສັດ ເດືອນອ້າຍ ຂຶ້ນ ໙ ຄ່ຳ ວັນອາທິດ ລິດຈະນາ ແລ້ວຍາມແຖໄກ້ທ່ຽງ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຜູ້ຊື່ ພະຂະໜານກຸນລະວັງໂສເປັນເຄົ້າ ແລະອັນເຕວາສິກາ ໄດ້ລິຂິດສ້າງຍັງພຸດທະຕຳນານອັນນີ້.” Translated, this means:

It was Chulasakarat 1224, a *tao set* year, the first lunar month, the ninth day of waxing moon, Sunday (Corresponding to AD 1826, the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, Sunday). [This manuscript] was completed at the time between 9 am and 10:30 am. I, Pha Khanan (monk) Kunlavangso and my disciple(s) wrote this version of *Phuttha Tamnan* (the Legend of the Buddha).

In addition, three wishes of the people who initiated the writing of this manuscript are worth mentioning. These read: “ເມື່ອໃດຂ້າພື້ນຈາກຄັບມານດາແລ້ວ ຂໍໃຫ້ບໍລະບວນໄປດ້ວຍອົງຄະວັນນະ ງາມລ້ວນສະເໝີກັນ; ຂໍໃຫ້ໄດ້ກະທຳທານະປາລະມີ ສີລະປາລະມີ; ອະທັງ ປັດເຈກະພຸດໂທ ໂທມີ ນິບພານະປັດຈະໂຍ ໂທຕຸ ອະນາຄະເຕ ກາເລ.” This means:

I wish, at the time I am reborn, my body parts shall be complete and perfect and my complexion of skin will be clear (1); may I give alms and follow the precepts (2); and may I [acquire merit by writing this manuscript to be one of] the conditions helping me to attain [the state of] Pacceka Buddha<sup>87</sup> and *nibbāna* in the next life (3).

The three wishes of the ones who wrote and initiated the making of this manuscript reflect the influence of the stories of the former lives of the Buddha (Jataka) and the Pacceka Buddha. The first wish – wishing to be reborn with complete and perfect body parts and with a clear skin complexion, and the second one – wishing to be able to give alms and follow the precepts – are slightly different from the requests of the Phutsadi Goddess from Indra before she came down to be born as a human being and give birth to Prince Vessantara (BAD-13-1-0227). The person who wrote this manuscript might have known the story of Prince Vessantara and other Jataka stories – perhaps because he had read and preached such stories many times because as a monk.

The last one wish – wishing to be reborn, attain the status of Pacceka Buddha, and finally reach *nibbāna* – is different from the first two. This desire is the only one of the three written in Pali. This is evidence of at least basic abilities in Pali in order to follow the traditional forms for making manuscripts. However, the scribe’s desire might also have been influenced by an account that says that many Pacceka Buddhas are supposed to be born at the same time.

This manuscript describes how and why locations were named and the stores related to these locations. The story begins with an introduction to the three mountains. Two of the three mountain names, Nya Chao and Pu Chao, sound as if they refer to personal names, perhaps the first settlers of the mountains. The person who compiled the story linked the events back to the time of the Buddha. Furthermore, the colophon states that the text tells the story of the Buddha. The title of the text, appearing in the left margin of the recto page of the first leaf, *Tamnan Dòi Tung*, and the one mentioned in the colophon, *Phuttha Tamnan*, are not the same. These demonstrate that the person who wrote the colophon of this manuscript tried to associate the story of Dòi Tung Mountain with the story of the Buddha. Doing so appears to have been an attempt to make the mountain consecrated.

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<sup>87</sup> A Pacceka Buddha is one who has attained the knowledge necessary to overcome suffering on his own, but is unable to preach the knowledge to the others. For more details about Pacceka Buddhas, see Witshire 1990.

## 7. Conclusion

Texts related to seven categories (Vinaya, Sutta, Chanting, Jataka, Anisong, and Buddhist chronicle) have been discussed in this chapter. These texts deal with basic monastic regulations and matters prescribed for monks, novices, and nuns, as well as being repositories of advice for laypeople to follow.

The *Kammavācā* and *pāṭimokkha* texts discussed are examples of the Vinaya category. The former is a chant used in ordination ceremonies; the latter is a set of 227 rules that govern the daily activities of monks. It seems that Sathu Nyai Khamchan paid attention to these texts; he repaired the front and the back covers of a manuscript containing a *Kammavaca* text and left two notes in it. Furthermore, he compiled a Lao version of the *Patimokkha*. He studied the texts of *pāṭimokkha* that were recorded in the Tham-Lao scripts in many palm-leaf and paper manuscripts. He then compiled a new version of *pāṭimokkha* also recorded in Tham-Lao scripts. Many copies of this version were made under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior and Religious Affairs in 1959 by utilizing modern techniques of printing. It is reasonable to say that the text was transferred from traditional writing materials to being recorded on modern industrially-produced paper.

Two manuscripts containing texts related to the Suttanta category, namely *Akaravattasut* (one of the texts for recitation in a ritual ceremony organized for peace and prosperity) and *Mungkhunsut* (a discourse of virtuous behaviour and acts), have colophons with specific feature. The colophon of the former clearly says that a person can gain merit “by paying for copying the text of *Akaravattasut*”, but the other colophons note that a person can obtain merit “by making a manuscript that contains the *Akaravattasut* text”. The person who wrote the colophon of this manuscript tried to propagate Buddhism by asking people to make donations allocated to the production of manuscripts. With regard to its two colophons, *Mungkhunsut* was donated two times in 1918 and 1921 by the same donors, namely Thit Nya and Sao Kham. This suggests that any person can re-donate manuscripts or other religious objects – such as Buddha images and monk robes – that have already been donated by other people if he/she wishes to do so.

Manuscripts containing texts related to the Chant category have two passages reflecting the traditional ways that monks, novices, nuns and laypeople went about learning these. The first passage says that this Chant text must be learnt by heart via memorization. This way of learning is also reflected in Lao saying “ອ່ານໄດ້ ຈື່ຫຼາຍ”, which means “be able to read, remember many things”. The person who wrote the passage may have wanted this text to be learnt according to tradition. Unlike the first passage, the second one deals with the importance of presenting an offering before beginning with the learning process. A

learner must arrange a platter with offering before learning each chapter, otherwise he might be considered an immoral person or unsuitable for preaching Buddhism.

Of texts related to the Jataka category, the story of Prince Vessantara (Vessantara Jataka) is selected as an exemplary text. The name of this story is known to the Lao people as Phavet (ພະເຫວດ). Furthermore, Phavet is used as the name of a traditional festival (Phavet festival), usually celebrated in the fourth lunar month. The main reason for organizing this festival is to listen to the story of Prince Vessantara which comprises thirteen chapters. The story was compiled in poetic form; it combines Pali words and phrases with the Lao translation of these words and phrases. The different styles of compilation utilized while composing this text reflect upon the abilities of the writer. In addition, the passages and notes in these manuscripts indicate that they were frequently used and checked accordingly.

*Anisong* texts are quite short compared to other types of religious texts, but they seem to be used more frequently and their versions are variegated. Some versions reflect the change of compilation from old to new-fashioned language expressions which can be found in the preface (introductory before the main text) and afterword (concluding remark following the main text). *Anisong* texts are used for teaching a newly ordained monk or novice to learn to preach (*hian thet* ສຽງເຫວດ), and more precisely to read a variant of the Dhamma script. Therefore, *Anisong* manuscripts are not kept in cabinets, but instead are stored nearby for easy access during the next lesson.

Five manuscripts containing texts related to Buddhist chronicles have been discussed in this chapter. The palm-leaf manuscript BAD-13-1-0222 entitled *Pha Uppakhut Phap Phanya Man* (“Monk Uppakhut defeats the king of *māra*”) deserves a special mention; it has a colophon and includes two extra folios of text in addition to the twenty-four folios comprising the main text. It seems that the added text is a local legend about the introduction of Buddhism into Laos; it also narrates events during the reign of King Ashoka of ancient India. Its colophon states that the manuscript was made by Sathu Nyai Khamchan to commemorate his fifty-sixth birthday; the creation of this manuscript was act of merit-making to mark this special event.



## Chapter 4

### Knowledge Related to Secular Subjects

This chapter discusses manuscripts containing secular texts classified in Chapter 2 (Table 2.6). The categories for these texts are Secular History, Astrology, Medicine/Magic, Customary Law, Philology, Customs/Rituals, and Literary Works. Texts related to these categories are sometimes not written neither as a separate palm-leaf manuscript or a folded book, but instead appears as passages inserted in manuscripts containing texts of other genres. Furthermore, the text of any manuscript placed into a certain category might contain passages, notes, and colophons that are related to different matters. In addition, some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan contain texts which fall into the categories of “multiple-text manuscripts”; this is especially the case vis-à-vis paper manuscripts.

#### 1. Secular history

Some manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode contain information concerning historical events. These events were recorded on a single leaf or a set of leaves which was then either attached to a certain fascicle or kept together with other fascicles in a bundle. Like palm-leaf manuscripts, some paper manuscripts, and especially those written on mulberry paper, contain short accounts detailing the history of Luang Prabang. Most of this information pertains to the kings of Lan Xang and their support for the construction of temples and stupas (*pha that*).

#### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0188

This is an untitled and undated manuscript comprising only one palm leaf measuring 42.4 cm in length and 5 cm in width. The text was written in modern Lao script with a ballpoint pen in blue ink, with four lines on only a single page without pagination. The text of this manuscript is very fascinating in spite of its brevity. It provides information about the creator of the manuscript, probably Sathu Nyai Khamchan himself, who wrote a story according to a local historical legend. The text tells of Chao Anurut building a stupa at the top of Phu Si Mountain (ຈອມພູສີ) in the CS 1166 (AD 1804). The text reads:

ສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າອະນຸລຸດມະຫາອຸດຕະມະວົງ ຂົງສີສັດຕະນາຄະນະທຸດອຸດົມ ລັດຕະນະບຸລີລົມ ພົມມະຈັກກະພັດ [...] ຂົງສ້າງພະທາດໃສ່ຈອມພູສີນີ້ ດັ່ງມີສິລາເລກຈາລຶກວ່າ ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໑໖໖ ຕົວ ປີກາບໄຈ້ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ແຮມ ໗ ຄ່ຳ ວັນພຸດ ມື້ເຕົ້າສະງ້າ ຍາມທ່ຽງຄືນ ຈຶ່ງກໍ່ເປັນມະຫາເຈຕິຍະໄວ້ [...] ລົງເດືອນ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໑ ຄ່ຳ ວັນຈັນ ມື້ເປີກເສັດ ຍາມພາດລ້ຽນມື້ຄ່ຳ ຈຶ່ງໄດ້ຖາປະນາ [...] ພະຍາທຳມະວຸດທິມະຫາອຸດຕະມະວົງ ສະເໜີຍລາຊະສົມບັດໃນເມືອງສີສັດຕະນາຄະນະທຸດ ອຸດຕະມະລາຊະທານີ.

King Anurut Uttama Vong Khong Si Satta Nakha Nathut Udom Rattana Buri Rom Phomma Chakkaphat [...] built a stupa at the top of Phu Si Mountain, which has been recorded in an inscription. The inscription reads that it was Chulasakarat 1166, a *kap chai* year, in the eleventh lunar month, on the seventh day of the waning moon, a Wednesday, a *tao sang* day, (AD 26 September 1804) began to build the stupa at midnight [...] On the eleventh day of the waxing moon, a Monday, a *poek set* day, at a time between 16:30 and 18:00. [He] wish, [...] Phanya Thamma Vutthi Maha Uttama Vong, who ascended the throne in Müang Si Satta Nakha Nathut Uttama Racha Thani.

King Anurut's title in this text is different from that of the title appearing in Maha Sila Viravong's work, King Anuruttha. In this manuscript, the reigning name of King Anurut and the name of Luang Prabang were formed by a number of words derived from Pali. Pali words are required to form the full names of kings, royalty, and high-ranking officials. Furthermore, this text states that, at the time the inscription was made in 1804, the official name of Luang Prabang was still the same as that of Vientiane, which by then had become the new capital of the Kingdom of Lan Xang in 1560, even if Luang Prabang had already been a capital before (Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 73).

In Maha Sila Viravong's work (2001: 137), King Anurut ruled the kingdom of Luang Prabang under Siamese suzerainty from 1791 to 1817. However, Maha Sila Viravong's work does not take into account the building of the stupa. Therefore, Sathu Nyai Khamchan consulted an inscription<sup>88</sup> to find the information he was looking for, clearly indicates he was able to read inscriptions. In other words, such an inscription might be inscribed in a certain of Lao script and transcribed into modern Lao script by the writer.

It seems that the person who made this inscription recognized that Luang Prabang was first introduced as the name of the former capital of the Lan Xang kingdom in 1560. The name was not used to denote the whole kingdom. Maha Sila Viravong (2001: 73) notes that King Sayasetthathilat, with the consent of his high-ranking officials, gave

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<sup>88</sup> No information about the inscription mentioned in this manuscript has been provided.

Müang Xiang Thòng to the Buddhist Sangha (ພະສັງຄະເຈົ້າ) and transferred the capital city of Lan Xang from Müang Xiang Thòng to Vientiane. He brought the Emerald Buddha (*pha kaeo mòlakot*) and *pha saek kham* with him to the new capital, but not the Pha Bang statue. Furthermore, Buddhist monks were asked to associate themselves with the administration of the old capital city. From that time onwards, Müang Xiang Thòng was called Müang Luang Prabang. This Buddha statue has also been recognized as an auspicious symbol of the old capital city. Stuart-Fox (1998: 76) cogently argues that the move to Vientiane gave the king and the people a better chance to develop the Kingdom of Lan Xang and counter potential threats posed by regional powers.

### **The insertion in manuscript BAD-13-1-0222**

As discussed in Chapter 3, manuscript BAD-13-1-0222, entitled *Pha Upakhut Phap Phanya Man* (“Monk Upakhut Defeats the King of *māra*”), was categorized as a Buddhist Chronicle. In this section the insertion contained within that manuscript will be presented. The insertion provides in chronological order information on the various kings of the Lan Xang kingdom who supported the construction of numerous stupas.

The insertion was added as an introductory text detailing that the stupa festival (ບຸນທາດ/ບຸນສະຫຼອງທາດ) has been organized since ancient times. The text first begins with a number of Pali words followed by vernacular Lao. It reads:

*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa imehi sabbe mayaṃ samāgatā ... idacetiyaṃ sabbadda ca jinadhātu cetiye pūjeyya ayaṃ no pūjā āsava khayā vahātu* (and followed by vernacular Lao) ວັນນີ້ເປັນວັນຂຶ້ນ ໑໕ ຄໍ່າ ເດືອນ ໑໒ ເປັນວັນທີ່ພວກເຮົາ ຊາວພຸດທະບໍລິສັດ ທັງຄະລິທັດ ແລະບັນພະຊົດມາຊຸມນຸມກັນ ເພື່ອນ້ອມໄຫວ້ສັກກາລະບູຊາພະບໍລົມສາລິລິກະທາດ ຂອງສົມເດັດພະສໍາມາສໍາພຸດທະເຈົ້າ ເຊິ່ງ ບັນຈຸຢູ່ໃນພະເຈດີນີ້. (Translation for the vernacular Lao): Today is the fifteenth day of the waxing moon in the twelfth lunar month. We, Buddhist devotees, both ordained and un-ordained, have gathered here to worship the Buddha’s relics within this stupa.

This part of the text suggests that the writer intended to introduce his audience – using a modern style of writing (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5) – to a short story of the Buddha’s relics, which were once distributed and placed in a number of stupas. The text then continues by describing the erection of stupas between the time of King Ashoka (ca. BC 269–232) of ancient India and the reign of Chao Manthatulat of Luang Prang (1817–1836). Seven kings are mentioned as sponsors of such constructions.

ອະປະລະພາເຄ ຄັນພະພຸດທະສາສະໜາລ່ວງມາໄດ້ 218 ປີ ພະເຈົ້າສີທຳມາໂສກະລາດກໍໄດ້ໄປ ຊຸດຄົ້ນເອົາພະບໍລົມມະທາດອອກມາ ບັນຈຸໃນພະເຈດີທັງ ຕູ້ ໝື່ນ ໔ ພັນ (໑) ... ໃນປີ ພ.ສ. ໑໙໐໐ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໓໕໗) ສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າຟ້າງຸ່ມກໍໄດ້ນຳເອົາພະບາງ ເຊິ່ງບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດຢູ່ໃນອົງຫ້າ ແຫ່ງມາສູ່ປະເທດລາວ (໒). ຄັນຮອດປີເຕົ້າສັນ ຈ.ສ. ຕຸກຸ໔ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໕໑໓) ພະເຈົ້າວິຊຸນລະລາດ ຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດແລ້ວກໍໄດ້ສ້າງພະທາດໝາກໂມ ໄດ້ບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດໄວ້ຢູ່ທີ່ວັດວິຊຸນ (໓). ພະເຈົ້າໂພທິສານຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດແລ້ວ ຮອດປີ ຈ.ສ. ຕຸຕູ໙ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໕໒໗) ໄດ້ເລີກການຖືຜີ ແລ້ວ ສ້າງພະເຈດີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດທີ່ວັດສັງຄະໂລກ (໔). ພະເຈົ້າໄຊຍະເຊດຖາຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດ ແລ້ວ ຮອດປີ ຈ.ສ. ໙໑໐ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໕໔໘) ໄດ້ສ້າງພະມະຫາທາດບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດໄວ້ຢູ່ທີ່ວັດ ທາດດຽວນີ້ (໕). ຄັນມາຮອດສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າອະນຸລຸດຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດ[ແລ້ວ ຮອດ]ຈ.ສ. ໑໑໖໖ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໘໑໔) ກໍໄດ້ສ້າງພະທາດຈອມສີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະສາລິລິກະທາດ (໖). ... ສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າ ມັນທາຕຸລາດໄດ້ຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດແທນພະລາຊະບິດາແລ້ວ ປີເປີກຍີ່ ຈ.ສ. ໑໑໘໐ (ຄ.ສ. ໑໘໑໘) ໄດ້ຊົງສ້າງພະທາດຫຼວງນີ້ ພ້ອມທັງພະເຈດີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດ (໗).

Two hundred and eighteen years after the Buddha passed away, his relics or *pha bōlomma that* (Pali: *parama dhātu* ພະບໍລົມມະທາດ) were divided amongst eighty-four thousand stupas by King Ashoka the Great (1). [...] Much later, in AD 1357, the Pha Bang statue, believed to contain five pieces of *pha bōlomma that* – was brought to the Lan Xang kingdom under the initiation of King Fa Ngum (2). In AD 1513, King Visunlarat built the Mak Mo stupa at Vat Visun to house *pha bōlomma that* (3). In AD 1527, King Phothisan ordered people in his kingdom to stop worshipping spirits. He then ordered for the construction of a stupa in Vat Sangkhalok to hold *pha bōlomma that* (4). In AD 1548, King Sayasettha built a great stupa at present-day Vat That to hold *pha bōlomma that* (5). In AD 1804, King Anurut built a stupa at the top of Phu Si mountain (*that chòm si*) to hold *pha bōlomma saririka that* (6). [...] In AD 1818, King Manthaturat built this That Luang [in Luang Prabang] and other stupa to enshrine *pha bōlomma that* (7).

King Fa Ngum is often referred to as the first king of the Lan Xang kingdom established in AD 1353. Six years later, as noted in Chapter 2, the King sent his envoys to Cambodia asking for his father-in-law’s help by sending learned Buddhist monks and scholars to Laos. Buddhism was introduced to Lan Xang via Cambodia in AD 1359. Well-educated members of the Buddhist Sangha of the Khmer Empire, including Pha Maha Pasamanta Thera and Pha Maha Thep Langka, carried with them the Tipiṭaka (Pali Canon) and the Pha Bang Buddha statue . They were warmly welcomed to Xiang Thòng, the capital city of Lan Xang. Along with them came three un-ordained senior Buddhist scholars (ນັກປາດຜູ້ຮຽນ ຈົບພະໄຕບິດີກ) and a number of their followers (Lorrillard 2003: 188; Evans 2002: 16; Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 46).

No details concerning the Pha Bang are mentioned in Maha Sila Viravong's work, but some features of this Buddha statue do appear in some palm-leaf manuscripts belonging to the DLLM, such as no. 06-01-07-13-307-02. This manuscript says that the Pha Bang statue was made in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) by a Buddhist monk called Chulanagathera. The statue is said to contain five relics of the Buddha: one in the forehead, one at the chin, one in the chest, one in the left arm, and one inside the right arm. When this statue was being made, people contributed gold, copper, and brass to Monk Chulanagathera.<sup>89</sup> The posture is that of peace, raising both hands to stop the fighting between two armies.

The writer of the text above might have taken his information from a chronicle of Luang Prabang or the like. Therefore, he directly wrote, “ສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າຟ້າງຸ່ມກໍໄດ້ນຳເອົາພະບາງເຊິ່ງບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດຢູ່ໃນອົງຫ້າແຫ່ງມາສູ່ປະເທດລາວ” (folio 1, verso) – “His Majesty the King Fa Ngum brought the Pha Bang, containing relics of the Buddha in five parts of its body, to Laos.” The writer stated that Pha Bang contained the Buddha's relics and was brought to Laos – he might want to emphasise the sacredness of the Pha Bang and noted that Laos is one country having the Buddha's relics. In addition, the date mentioned in the text is two years earlier (1357) than the one mentioned in Maha Sila Viravong's work (1359). The writer may have meant the year in which King Fa Ngum sent his envoy to Cambodia, whereas Maha Sila Viravong's number refers to the arrival of the envoy in Lan Xang.

Second, the text reads, “ຄັນຮອດປີເຕົ້າສັນ ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ຕຸກ໒ ພະເຈົ້າວິຊຸນລະລາດຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດ [ແລ້ວ]ກໍໄດ້ສ້າງພະທາດໝາກໂມ ໄດ້ບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດໄວ້ຢູ່ທີ່ວັດວິຊຸນ.” This translates as the following: “Reaching a *tao san* year, Chulasakarāt 875 (AD 1513), King Visun [ordered for] the construction of the Mak Mo stupa in Vat Visun and for relics to be stored there.” The year mentioned in the text is nine years later than that mentioned in Maha Sila Viravong's work (2001: 61–62). Maha Sila Viravong narrates that King Visun ruled the kingdom of Lan Xang between 1500 and 1520, and that Vat Visun was completed in AD 1504. He further stated that a stupa, twenty-three *va*<sup>90</sup> tall, was built after the construction of the Vat Visun. Lorrillard (2003: 192) also notes that King Visun was the first monarch founder of a

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<sup>89</sup> For further information about Pha Bang, please see manuscript 06-01-07-13-307-01, 06-01-07-13 307-02, 06-01-14-13-025-01, 06-01-14-13-025-02 and 06-01-03-13-201-03. Evans (2002: 15-16) contends that: “The reigns of the Kings Visun (1501–20), Phothisarāt (1520–47) and Sethathirat (1548–71), while together constituting a glorious period for Lan Xang, did not initiate any fundamental structural changes to the kingdom. Their reigns saw the increasing elaboration of regalia of Buddhist kingship; Visun is best remembered for installing the Phra Bang as the palladium (protector) of the Lan Xang kings. This Buddha image from Sri Lanka had its way as far as Vientiane, in the company of Buddhist missionaries from Angkor, in the time of Fa Ngum” (Evans 2002 15–16).

<sup>90</sup> One standard *va* is equal to two metres.

monastery or donator of land in Luang Prabang, but no information about the building of a stupa appears in his work.

Maha Sila Viravong (2001: 62) and Stuart-Fox (1998: 71) have shown how, during King Visun's reign, the kingdom of Lan Xang was peaceful. Buddhism also flourished under his rule as there were a number of Buddhist scholars in attendance possessing much experience in Sanskrit and Buddhist teachings. In addition, a Sanskrit book, *pañcatantra*, was translated into Lao by a senior monk, and the original version of the Chronicle of Khun Bulom was co-authored by two senior monks and the king himself. It seems that there were numerous events concerning Buddhism which took place during King Visun's reign. In short, he was one of the many kings of Lan Xang who encouraged the spread of both Buddhism and literary works during their time on the throne. As such, the year which appeared in the writer's text might be a year in which other events took place, or any literary works were conducted (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: 166).

Third, the text reads, “ພະເຈົ້າໂພທິສານຂຶ້ນສະເໜີຍລາດແລ້ວ ຮອດປີຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ຕູຕູລ ໄດ້ເລີກການ ຖືຜີ ແລ້ວສ້າງພະເຈດີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດ ທີ່ວັດສັງຄະໂລກ.” – “King Phothisan took the throne. Reaching Chulasakarat 889 (AD 1527) he [ordered his people to] stop the worship of spirits (ຜີ). Then, he [ordered for] the construction of a stupa in Vat Sangkhalok to contain the relics.” Here, the year is the same as the one mentioned in Maha Sila Viravong's work (2001: 63). If the writer of the text is correct, then the stupa might have been built later on. Since King Phothisan's reign lasted 30 years (1520–1550), any type of construction project is plausible. Concerning the worship of spirits, Stuart-Fox (1998: 74–75) elucidates:

In 1527, Phothisararat issued a famous decree proclaiming the worship of *phi* as groundless superstition, ordering their shrines to be destroyed and their altars thrown into the river. Although the bloodier propitiation rites were thus finally suppressed, popular spirit worship nevertheless continued to be practised.

King Phothisan was a devout Buddhist king. Both Stuart-Fox (1998: 75) and Maha Sila Viravong (2001: 63) state that King Phothisan sent his envoy to Chiang Mai in 1523 with the hope that they would return with a copy of the Tipiṭaka and in the company of learned Buddhist monks. Maha Sila Viravong also notes that King Phothisan left his palace to become ordained as a monk, staying at Vat Visun during the Buddhist Lent. He learnt Buddhist teachings with two senior monks, after which he disrobed and returned to the throne. In 1527, he replaced the houses and altars built for various kinds of spirits (ຜີ) with monasteries. Vat Savankhalok was built on the spot where a former altar for royal spirit worship had been located.

Fourth, the text reads, “ພະເຈົ້າໄຊຍະເຊດຖາຂຶ້ນສະເຫວີຍລາດແລ້ວ ຮອດປີຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໙໑໐ ໄດ້ສ້າງພະມະຫາທາດບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດ ໄວ້ຢູ່ທີ່ວັດທາດດຽວນີ້.” This means: “King Sayasettha has ascended the throne. In Chulasakarat 910 (AD 1548) he [initiated] the construction of a great stupa in present-day Vat That to hold the relics.” The event took place in the year mentioned in the text, which differs from the event taking place in the same year mentioned in Maha Sila Viravong’s work (2001), who records that King Sayasettha was 14 years old in AD 1548.<sup>91</sup> He was sent to rule Mūang Chiang Mai by his father, King Phothisan, according to the requests of high-ranking officials in the *mūang*. His father passed away two years later and he returned to Luang Prabang to organize the funeral. He was also ordained as a novice in order to be at the front of his father’s procession. After the cremation, he built a stupa to hold the remains of his father, but the location of this stupa is not mentioned.

Both the kingdoms of Lan Xang and Lan Na (Chiang Mai) fell into states of disorder following the death of King Phothisan (Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 69–72; Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: 128). Therefore, King Sayasettha had to work very hard to solve the problems arising in his two kingdoms. This suggests that he might not have had enough time to organize the building of a stupa. However, King Sayasettha did manage to initiate the celebration and construction of three main stupas: That Si Sòng Hak in AD 1560, That Nòng Han in AD 1653 (both in present-day Thailand), and That Luang in Vientiane in AD 1566 (Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 72–77). According to Stuart-Fox (1998: 80), King Sayasettha was a devotee of Buddhism:

Like his father, Sayasettha was a great patron of Buddhism. In fact we have more epigraphic records of his gifts to the Sangha (ten between the years 1551 and 1567) than for any other Lao king. Several new monasteries were founded during his reign, not only in the capital, but also in Luang Prabang (Vat That) and provincial centres (Stuart-Fox 1998: 80).

It seems that King Sayasettha was responsible for the building of many temples and several stupas. We can also deduce that the writer determined that the stupa standing in present-day Vat That in Luang Prabang was built during the reign of King Sayasettha. He may not have personally given the order for its construction, but the elites close to him must have been involved at the very least.

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<sup>91</sup> Concerning the year of King Sayasettha’s succession to the throne of Lan Na, some sources record that he was invited to rule the kingdom in 1546 (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: xxvi).

Fifth, the text reads, “ຄັນມາຮອດສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າອະນຸລຸດຂຶ້ນສະເໜີຍລາດ ປີຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໑໖໖ ກໍໄດ້ສ້າງພະທາດຈອມສີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະສາລິລິກະທາດ”. This translates as the following: “It then reached [the time for] His Majesty the King Anurut to take the throne. He initiated the construction of the Phu Si stupa in Chulasakarāt 1166 (AD 1804) to contain the Buddha’s relics.” The year mentioned in the text was during the reign of King Anurut (1791–1817), but the construction of the stupa is missing in Maha Sila Viravong’s work. Stuart-Fox’s work does not provide any information about King Anurut’s reign.

Maha Sila Viravong’s work says nothing about the construction of the stupa during the reign of King Anurut. Furthermore, his work deals with the situation in Luang Prabang under the Siamese suzerainty. Like Vientiane, Luang Prabang became a vassal *müang* of Siam from 1778 to 1893 (ibid. pp. 136–137). King Anurut, high-ranking officials and other people – including monks, novices and nuns – might have been unfamiliar with the new administrative system that was set up by Siam. The construction of the Phu Si stupa during King Anurut’s reign was undertaken by the time that their *müang* lost its independence.

Sixth, the text reads, “ຄັນພະເຈົ້າອະນຸລຸດສະຫວັນນະຄົດແລ້ວ ສົມເດັດພະເຈົ້າມັນທາຕຸລາດ ໄດ້ຂຶ້ນສະເໜີຍລາດແທນພະລາຊະບິດາ ແລ້ວປີເປີກຍີ່ ປີຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໑໘໐ ໄດ້ຊົງສ້າງພະທາດຫຼວງນີ້ ພ້ອມທັງພະເຈດີບັນຈຸພະບໍລົມມະທາດຂອງສົມເດັດພະສໍາມາສໍາພຸດທະເຈົ້າໄວ້” meaning: “After King Anurut passed away, Manthaturat came to the throne to succeed his father. Reaching the *poek yi* year Chulasakarāt 1180 (AD 1818), he initiated the construction of the That Luang stupa, as well as an additional stupa to contain the Buddha’s relics.” The year mentioned in the text was the second year of the reign of King Manthaturat (1817–1836).

During the reign of King Manthaturat, the king decided to hand over his royal title and crown (ລາຊະສົມບັດ) to Upahat Nak, the viceroy, to rule in his name. He then travelled to Bangkok and became ordained as a monk so that he could be at the front of King Rama II’s funeral procession in Siam. He stayed in Vat Maha That in Bangkok for the duration of one Buddhist Lent. Thereafter, he disrobed and reclaimed his throne in Luang Prabang (Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 137). It seems that King Manthaturat had the opportunity to study Buddhist teachings when he lived as a monk in a monastery (Vat Maha That) in Bangkok. However, his concern for Buddhism is unacknowledged after he returned to the throne. The situation during his reign might have been similar to that of the reign of King Anurut; in essence, that the ruler, his officials at all levels and the people paid much more attention to the new administrative system than to their daily activities.

The text ends with “ທັງຄະນະສົງ ແລະປະຊາຊົນໄດ້ພ້ອມກັນມາສົມໂພດສະເຫຼີມສະຫຼອງພະທາດໃນມື້ນີ້ຕາມແບບຢ່າງສະໄໝພະເຈົ້າສີທໍາມາໂສກະລາດ ໄດ້ສ້າງພະທາດ ໘ ພື້ນ ໔ ພັນແລ້ວ[ກໍ]ທໍາການສະຫຼອງນັ້ນ”, or “Today, [we,] both the Sangha (monks) and laypeople, gather here to celebrate the stupa, following the example of King Ashoka who [initiated] the construction of eighty-four



thousand stupas and the celebration of such stupas after their completion.” The writer attempts to explain why the celebration of the stupa was organized in the text’s introduction before the chanting of the main text. By doing so, he was able to impart more meaning to the main text for his audience, thereby making it easier to follow and understand.

### **Information left in manuscript BAD-13-1-0058**

This manuscript, entitled *Thutangkhavat*, a variant of the Pali word *dhutaṅgavatti* (“The Thirteen Ascetic Practice”), comprises 194 palm leaves that measure 57.5 cm in length and 4.5 cm in width, is divided into six fascicles. The text is written in the Tham-Lao script, with four lines on each page, and its pagination follows the orthographic system of Sanskrit. The text of this manuscript falls under the classification of custom/ritual. However, a short account, left after the concluding remarks of the last fascicle, reveals some information regarding the situation in Luang Prabang and beyond at that time (1854).

Unlike the two manuscripts mentioned above, manuscript no. BAD-13-1-0058, entitled *Thutangkhavat* or *Thudongkhavat*, contains a message that was inserted at the end of the text in the sixth fascicle of the manuscript. It reads:

ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມແຖໂກ້ຄໍ່າ ພໍ່າວ່າວັນ ໓ ເດືອນ ໔ ຂຶ້ນ ໒ ຄໍ່າ ປີກ່າເປົ້າ ເພິ່ນຂຶ້ນເມືອເສິກຊຽງ  
ຕຸງນັ້ນແທ້ແລນາ ທ່ານທັງຫຼາຍເຮີຍ ໃຜຢາກໄດ້[ຂໍໃຫ້]ຂຶ້ນໃຈເອົາເທັ້ນ ຂໍສ່ວນບຸນນໍາຫຼາຍໆແດ່  
ເທັ້ນ. (Colophon A)

[This manuscript] was completed between 3:00 pm. and 4:30 pm., on the third day of the week (Tuesday), in the fourth lunar month on the second day of the waxing moon in a *ka pao* year, [the year] they went up [north] for the war in Chiang Tung. Anyone wishing to obtain this text and learn it by heart, please share with me the merit gained from [the practice of] this text.

This indicates that the circumstances during the time that this manuscript was written may have made such a task significantly more difficult than in times of peace. As the six-fascicle manuscript consists of one hundred and ninety-four palm leaves, it surely took the scribe a considerable amount of time to complete it. Having accomplished such a task, the scribe was probably very proud and thus made a note of the challenges that he had overcome. The writer’s note holds true: in BE 2395 (AD 1852) three thousand people of Luang Prabang were recruited for service in the Siamese army marching to Chiang Tung (Kromphrayā Damrongrāchānuphāp (Kromphrayā Damrong) 1962: 791–792).

Only three of the fascicles (Fascicle 1, 4, and 6) contain colophons. Fascicle 6 has two colophons, of which one has already been presented above. The other colophon is similar to that of Fascicles 1 and 4, which were written on a separate leaf rather than at the end of the texts. They read:

ພະວໍລະມັງຄະລະພະມະຫາ(ຈຸນລະ)ສັງກາດລາຊະໄດ້ ໑໒໑໕ ປີກາເປົ້າ ເດືອນ ໓ ແຮມ ໑໑ ຄໍ່າ  
ວັນ ໕ ມື້ຮວຍຍີ່ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມກອງແລງ ໝາຍມີມະຫາບຸບຜາປັນຍາພິກຂຸມີໃຈໃສສັດທາ  
ສ້າງທຸ້ງຄະວັດ ໄວ້ກັບວໍລະພຸດທະສາສະໜາ[ຂອງ]ພະບູລົມມະໂຄດົມເຈົ້າ ຕາບຕໍ່ເທົ່າ ໕ ພັນ  
ພະວັດສາ ຂໍໃຫ້ໄດ້ດັ່ງຄໍາມັກຄໍາປາຖະໜາທຸກເຍື່ອງທຸກປະການ [ກໍຂ້າເທີນ] ນິບພານະ ປັດຈະໂຍ  
ອະຫັງ ພຸດໂທ ໂຫມ. (Colophon B).

It was [Chula]sakarāt 1215, a *ka pao* year, in the third lunar month on the eleventh day of the waning moon, a Thursday, a *hwai nyi* day (Day of the Rabbit). (AD 1854, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, Thursday) The copying [of this fascicle of the palm-leaf manuscript] was completed at a time between 1:30 and 3:00 pm. [I,] Maha Buppha Pannya Phikkhu, am a faithful [Buddhist], [thus I] made [this] version of Thutangkhavat to support the continuation of Buddhism for five thousand *vassa* (rain retreats). [I] wish for all my wishes to be fulfilled. [May my merit] guide me to attain [Pacceka] Buddha and achieve *nibbāna* [in the future].

Interestingly, the dates and times mentioned in the colophons of this fascicle are different from each other. This suggests that the dates and times mentioned should be considered as the time at which the copying was completed rather than the time of donation. The different dates and times mentioned in the colophons of this fascicle will not be discussed in detail here, but some contents pertaining to historical events shall be discussed. Colophon A states that the copying was completed around the time when the people of Luang Prabang were recruited and marched to Chiang Tung. The time is supported by the traditional dating system contained in Colophon B.

Without Colophon B, the historical event mentioned in Colophon A would be unverifiable. This means that without Colophon B one would not be able to know the time that the people of Luang Prabang went to war in Chiang Tung. Conversely, without Colophon A one cannot know what happened to the people during the time the manuscript was copied. Here, it is reasonable to say that Colophon B supplements the contents of Colophon A by providing additional information about conditions at the time.

In 1853, the Kingdom of Luang Prabang was ruled by King Chanthalat (1852–1871) as a Siamese vassal state. The king recruited three thousand men, forming an army, to join

Siamese forces to march on Chiang Tung. He also appointed Chao Silisa and Chao Khammao as commanders of his army. Chao Silisa is reported to have died on the battlefield, whereas the fate of Chao Khammao in and after the battle is unknown (Maha Sila Viravong 2001: 139). Maha Sila Viravong bases his claim on the work of Kromphrayā Damrong, *Thai War with the Burmese* (ไทยรบพม่า). During the fourth reign of the Chakri Dynasty, Siamese troops attacked Chiang Tung twice, once in BE 2395 (AD 1852) and once in BE 2396 (AD 1853).<sup>92</sup> At that time, Luang Prabang, a vassal state of Siam, was ordered to recruit 3000 men as a reserve army of labourers (กองกำลังเลียง) in support of the Siamese forces.

The works of the two writers are different from each other in terms of the purposes of recruitment and dates, but they indicate the same matter, namely that three thousand men were called into action from Luang Prabang to aid in the war between Siam and Burma in the 1850s. It is unlikely that the number 3000 is accurate. The recruitment of 3000 men from Luang Prabang in the 1850s would probably have been impossible without draining the entire region of strong male labour. In addition, Kromphrayā Damrong's work mentions that Siamese troops marched to suppress Chiang Tung twice in consecutive years, but does not detail the number of people that accompanied them from Luang Prabang. One possibility is that after the first transportation of war materials, some of recruited men were no longer fit for work due to fatigue and sickness over the long journey. As a result, so replacements were dispatched. Numbers like 1500–2000 for the first journey and then 1000–1500 replacements for the second may, by this logic, be more plausible.

The two colophons both record the year as *ka pao* (the Year of the Ox). However, the months, fortnights and days mentioned in the two colophons are different. Colophon A reads, “วัน ๓ เดือน ๔ ขึ้น ๘ ค่ำ” – Tuesday, in the fourth lunar month on the second day of the waxing moon - whereas Colophon B reads, “เดือน ๓ แรม ๑๑ ค่ำ วัน ๕ มีระวาญี่” – in the third lunar month, on the eleventh day of the waning moon, Thursday, a *hwai nyi* day (Day of the Rabbit) – thereby documenting the date of its donation. However, there is the question about why the date of manuscript's completion is six days later than that of its donation. One possibility is that the date noted for the donation was an important date for the donor; in effect, he needed to have this manuscript completed by the date mentioned in Colophon B or even prior to that. However, unknown circumstances during the copying of this manuscript may have delayed the scribe from finishing this task on time.

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<sup>92</sup> For more details concerning the war between Siam and Burma during the fourth reign of Rattanakosin, see Kromphrayā Damrongrāchānuphāp 1962, pp. 787–807.

## 2. Astrology

The majority of paper manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode deal with astrological topics. They are either in the form of mulberry or *khòì* paper manuscripts. Other palm-leaf manuscripts found in his domicile, especially the shorter ones, pertain to the same topic.<sup>93</sup> It is remarkable that manuscripts dealing with this matter were kept in the venerable abbot's abode. Even though no concrete evidence indicates whether the abbot used these manuscripts while he was alive, on some occasions he might have read them if only to identify and order them. All of the paper manuscripts were kept in the same cabinets as the palm-leaf manuscripts. This demonstrates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan paid attention to all of the manuscripts under his responsibility, regularly using some of them and reading the rest at other times.

In ancient times, the Lao people of Luang Prabang, and Laos as a whole, could not make a living out of natural supports. They would have recognized that various natural occurrences took place annually affecting their cultivation and harvests. Their observations of natural phenomena was passed down from one generation to the next up to the present day. People who are knowledgeable about such matters still plant their crops in the traditional manner; in essence, by only transplanting seedlings into the main plot (*bong, puk, dam* ບົງ, ປູກ, ດຳ) on auspicious days.

### Manuscript BAD-13-2-042

The manuscript entitled *Nang Sü Ha Mü Hai Mü Di* (ໜັງສືໜາມ້ຮ້າຍມ້ຕີ) contains a text about the calculation of auspicious and inauspicious days. It comprises 160 pages, measuring 36 cm in length and 11.6 cm in width. It is protected by two wooden boards serving as its covers. The manuscript, written in Chulasakarat 1270 (AD 1908), contains various texts written in the Tham-Lao, Tham-Lü and Lao Buan scripts. The texts were written with 6 – 8 lines per page and without pagination. A total of 47 folding pages contain diagrams, tables and illustrations, while 121 left-hand margins contain words and expressions relating thereto. White correction liquid appears on some pages of this manuscript.

The manuscript BAD-13-2-042 is one of ten manuscripts containing various types of text, including those covering auspicious and inauspicious days of burning (*mü fai mai* ມ້ໄພໄໝ້), days for getting a haircut (*mü tat phom* ມ້ຕັດຜົມ), days for planting a tree (*mü puk ton mai* ມ້ປູກຕົ້ນໄມ້), days for building a house (*mü puk hüan* ມ້ປູກເຮືອນ), days for moving into a new house (*mü khün hüan mai* ມ້ຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່), days for performing a ceremony at start

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<sup>93</sup> For more details see the manuscripts BAD-13-1-0057, BAD-13-1-0082, BAD-13-1-0330; BAD-13-2-003, BAD-13-2-007, BAD-13-2-042, BAD-13-2-043, BAD 13-2-054, BAD-13-2-059.

of rice planting (*mü haek na* ມີ້ແຮກນາ), days for seeing [one's] relatives (*mü pai ha phi nõng* ມີ້ໄປຫາພີ່ນ້ອງ), naming a newly-born child (*sai sü dek nõi* ໃສ່ຊື່ໄດ້ກນ້ອຍ), times for travelling (*nyam pai thang* ຍາມໄປທາງ), and the first annual thunder (*fa hõng pi mai* ພ້າຮ້ອງປີໃໝ່). Some of these matters are discussed in the following sections.

a) Days for planting a tree

The text concerning auspicious days for planting reads: “ຈາວັນປູກຕົ້ນໄມ້ທັງຫຼາຍກ່ອນແລ. ວັນ ໑ ປູກເອົາຮາກ. ວັນ ໒ ປູກເອົາລໍ່າ. ວັນ ໓ ປູກເອົາໃບ. ວັນ ໔ ປູກເອົາດອກ. ວັນ ໕ ປູກເອົາໜໍ່. ວັນ ໖ ປູກເອົາໝາກ. ວັນ ໗ ປູກເອົາເຫງົ້າເອົາລໍ່າ. ວັນປູກຕົ້ນໄມ້ແລ້ວທີ່ນີ້ກ່ອນແລ.” This translates as:

Day for growing various plants. [All types of plants, which are] cultivated on Sunday will develop their roots well; on Monday, their vines; on Tuesday, their leaves; on Wednesday, their flowers; on Thursday, their stems; on Friday, their fruits; and on Saturday, their trunks. Here, the end of comes the explanation of days for planting.

No concrete evidence exists to support this explanation or answer questions as to why and how this text was compiled. However, one possibility is that people held these beliefs based on their experiences. It may be dissimilar to the way that a present-day scholar gains knowledge about a previously unknown subject through the use of modern techniques and tools. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the people of Luang Prabang had nothing except traditional tools to support their agricultural work. They might have observed after many instances that plants cultivated on different days resulted in disparate outcomes.

The text also seems to indicate that people were allowed to cultivate any plant on any day without prohibitions, and if they did not follow the explanation then they would not suffer any negative effects vis-à-vis their own lives. They can grow any fruit tree on any day that they want. If a tree grows but bears no fruit then it will be cut down and used as firewood or for other purposes depending on the type of tree. The text also advises people not to cultivate different species of plants on the the same day and in the same soil.

Experience in cultivating plants and vegetables may have depended on local knowledge (see the Table 4.1 below). The soil in each location may differ, for instance, which determines which crops are suitable for cultivation. People in different locations may also cultivate one or more specific fruits and vegetables which become symbols of their localities. Materially speaking, many localities have the same fruits and vegetables, but not of the same shape, colour, and taste.

Table 4.1: Days and times for planting

Day	Version	Expected results	Time	Plant/Vegetable
Sunday	BAD-13-2-042	Roots (ປູກເອົາຮາກ)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Roots (ປູກເອົາຮາກເອົາເຫງົ້າ)	Noon	Ginger, galangal, taro, potato (ຂີງ, ຂ່າ, ເຜືອກ)
Monday	BAD-13-2-042	Trunks (ປູກເອົາລໍ່າ)	Not mentioned	
	Thòngkham	Vines (ປູກເອົາເຄືອ)	Morning	Cucumber, water melon
Tuesday	BAD-13-2-042	Leave (ປູກເອົາໃບ)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Leave (ປູກເອົາໃບ)	Noon	White mulberry, Melothria heterophylla, cabbage (ມອນ, ຜັກຕໍ່າລິງ, ຜັກກາດ)
Wednesday	BAD-13-2-042	Flowers (ປູກເອົາດອກ)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Flowers (ປູກເອົາດອກ)	Morning	Various types of flower plants; of plants with edible flowers
Thursday	BAD-13-2-042	Shoots/sprouts (ປູກເອົາໜໍ່)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Fruits (ປູກເອົາໝາກ)	Morning	Rice; various types of fruit trees
Friday	BAD-13-2-042	Fruits (ປູກເອົາໝາກ)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Fresh of fruits (ປູກເອົາເບືອກ)	Early morning	Mango, guava, longan (ໝາກມ່ວງ, ສີດາ, ລໍ່າໄຍ)
Saturday	BAD-13-2-042	Trunks (ປູກເອົາເຫງົ້າເອົາລໍ່າ)	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
	Thòngkham	Trunks (ປູກເອົາລໍ່າຕົ້ນ)	Evening	Sugar cane, ramie (ອ້ອຍ, ປ່ານ)

Developed from Thòngkham 2546 (2003) pp. 478–479 and manuscript BAD13-2-042

This table shows that people living in two different locations have mostly the same experience in cultivating plants and vegetables. One difference between two locations, however, is the expected results for growing plants on Thursday. The expected outcome of planting on a Thursday mentioned in manuscript BAD-13-2-042 is good stems, whereas in Thòngkham's work, Thursday is a good day to plant fruits. Such differences reflect a disagreement between scribes regarding such matters. In fact, many fruit trees can be grown by transplanting saplings that sprout from seeds, which is a normal way how a tree grows. The manuscript highlights the virtues of young plants with perfect qualities ready for transplantation, whereas Thòngkham's promotes the desirability of grown plants already bearing fruits. However, manuscript BAD-13-2-042 and Thòngkham all present the procedure of planting. The manuscript gives emphasis to putting seeds in the ground for growth, whereas Thòngkham lays stress on removing a young plant from one place and planting it in another location. It is possible that the information contained within the manuscript and in the Thongkham's work might have come from the same source though.

b) Days for building and moving into a new house

An excerpt of the text detailing the auspicious and inauspicious days to build and/or move into a new house reads as follows: “ຈາເດືອນປຸກເຮືອນ [ແລະ]ຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່ກ່ອນແລ. ເດືອນໃດກໍດີ ອອກຄໍ່າ ໑ ແຮມຄໍ່າ ໑ ຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່ຈັກໄດ້ເຂົ້າຂອງຢ່າງ ໑ ທ່ານຈັກເອົາຂອງມາສູ່ເຮົາ ດີແລ. ອອກ ໒ ຄໍ່າ ແຮມ ໒ ຄໍ່າ ຈັກໄດ້ກິນເມືອງ ດີແລ. ອອກ ໓ ແຮມ ໓ ຈັກໄດ້ຊຸ້ອັນ ດີແລ ... ອອກ ໑໓ ແຮມ ໑໓ ຄົນທັງເມືອງຈັກເອົາຂອງມາໃຫ້ ດີແລ. ອອກ ໑໔ ແຮມ ໑໔ ບໍ່ດີແລ. ອອກ ໑໕ ແຮມ ໑໕ ບໍ່ດີສັກຢ່າງແລ. ຈາປຸກເຮືອນ ຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່າ[ນີ້]ກ່ອນແລ.” This translates as:

Days for building a house and moving into a new house: The first days of both the waxing and the waning moon are good for [building a house and] moving into a new house. [The house owner] will get presents from others; the second day is good, [the owner] will have a chance to rule over *müang*; the third day is good, [the owner] will get everything he/she wants; ... the thirteenth day is good, [the owner] will receive presents from all people of *müang*; the fourteenth day is not good; the fifteenth day is not good at all. This marks the end of the explanation on the days for building and moving into a new house.

The summary of this text can be seen in the table below:

Table 4.2: Days for building a house and moving into a new house

Fortnight (both waxing and waning moon)	Indication	Explanation
1 <sup>st</sup> days	Good	House owner will get presents from others.
2 <sup>nd</sup> days	Good	House owner will have a chance to rule over <i>müang</i> .
3 <sup>rd</sup> days	Very good	House owner will get everything he/she wants.
4 <sup>th</sup> days	Not good	House owner will become poor.
5 <sup>th</sup> days	Very bad	House owner will be struck by thunderbolt or burnt.
6 <sup>th</sup> days	Bad	House owner will have no chance to live in the house.
7 <sup>th</sup> days	Good	House owner will receive presents from all people of <i>müang</i> .
8 <sup>th</sup> days	Not good	House owner will become poor.
9 <sup>th</sup> days	Good	House owner will be honoured.
10 <sup>th</sup> days	Good	No explanation
11 <sup>th</sup> days	Excellent	No explanation
12 <sup>th</sup> days	Not good	No explanation
13 <sup>th</sup> days	Good	House owner will receive presents from all people of <i>müang</i> .
14 <sup>th</sup> days	Not good	No explanation
15 <sup>th</sup> days	Not good at all	No explanation

Unlike the explanation of days for planting, the instructions on days for building and/moving into a house cover both permitted, auspicious days as well as taboo and inauspicious days. Every month people have eight auspicious days to organize a house building ceremony or move into a new house; conversely, there seven days that prohibit these ceremonies. Generally speaking, people do not know the number of auspicious and inauspicious days in a month and what they are, but they seem to follow the instructions. When they want to organize these ceremonies, they go to consult an expert teacher or *achan* (ອາຈານ) knowledgeable about the matter. *Achan* have been and continue to be invited to give their expert opinions on such occurrences.

Even though no scientific evidence to support the traditional assertions presented above, people in Laos pay much attention to the day that they move or organize a house building ceremony to this day. They are also very particular when it comes to the raw materials used to construct the different parts of the house, including the fundament posts or *sao hüan* (ເສົາເຮືອນ), and the boards used as floorboards, *paen pu* (ແປ້ນປູ), as well as the wallboards, *paen-aem* (ແປ້ນແອ້ມ). As Thongkham (2003: 520) observes (my translation), “Any time between the first and the fourth lunar month is a good time for cutting down a tree for the building of a house. Such work is forbidden between the fifth and the twelfth lunar month. In these months all types of trees are ordained.” It is reasonable to say that, in ancient times, Lao people were experienced in seeking and carrying wood to build their houses. The months permitted for cutting down tree comprised the dry season – in essence, most convenient time to work in the jungle – whereas most the forbidden months fall in rainy season – in effect, when it is very difficult to construct a house due to denser thickets in the jungle. These rules continue to be practiced even though modern technology means that wood is available during the rainy season as well.

Any person in Laos with his or her own house is honoured as someone with a perfect life. Lao people talk about this to each other as *ao mia dai lai pi laeo tae nyang bò than pen hüan pen san thüa* – ເອົາເມຍໄດ້ຫຼາຍປີແລ້ວ ແຕ່ຍັງບໍ່ທັນເປັນເຮືອນເປັນຊານເທື່ອ. – This means: “[He] got married many years ago, but he does not have his own house.” Traditionally, men lived at the house of the woman until they had sufficient resources to build their own house. Thus, it is very important for Lao men to build houses in order to escape the stigma of being a degenerate of some sorts. Also, Lao people usually arrange ritual ceremonies at their houses (ເຮັດບຸນເຮືອນ) every year, often during the Lao New Year.

### c) Days for visiting one’s relatives

An excerpt from the text detailing auspicious days for seeing one’s relatives reads: “ຈາມີ້ໄປ ຫາພີ່ນ້ອງກ່ອນແລ. ມີ້ໄຈ້ງວໄປສູ່ເສືອ ບໍ່ດີ. ມີ້ເປົ້າຄູດໄປສູ່ນາກ ດີ. ມີ້ຍີ່ແມວໄປສູ່ໜູ ດີ. ມີ້ເໝົ້າປາໄປສູ່ລົງ ບໍ່ດີ ... ມີ້ສັນໜູ



ໄປສູ່ແມວ ບໍ່ດີ. ມີເຮົາລົງໄປສູ່ປາ ດີ. ມີເສັດຊ້າງໄປສູ່ລາຊະສີ ບໍ່ດີ. ມີໄຕ້ຟານໄປສູ່ໝາ ບໍ່ດີແລ. ມີໄປຫາພີ່ນ້ອງ ໄປຫາຊຸນນາງ ໃຫ້ດູນີ້ເທົ່ານັ້ນ ກໍແລ້ວທີ່ນີ້ກ່ອນແລ.” In English, this means:

Days for seeing one’s relatives: [Seeing one’s relatives] on a *chai* day (the Day of the Rat) is not good, [it is compared with] a cow going to see a tiger; on a *pao* day (the Day of the Ox) is good, like a Garuda (Sanskrit: *garuḍa*) going to see a Naga (Pali and Sanskrit: *nāga*); on a *nyi* day (the Day of the Tiger) is good, like a cat going to see a rat; on a *mao* day (the Day of the Rabbit) is not good, like a fish going to see a monkey; ... on a *san* day (the Day of the Monkey) is not good, like a rat going to see a cat; on a *hao* day (the Day of the Cock) is good, like a monkey going to see a fish; on a *set* day (the Day of the Dog) is not good, likely an elephant going to see a lion; on a *khai* day (the Day of the Pig) is not good, like a barking deer going to see a dog. [A person, who wants to see his/her] relatives and bureaucrats, please read [and follow] this text. Here, comes the end [of the text].

The compiler who wrote the texts concerning days for planting and for building and moving into a new house used the days of the week and fortnights in his works. These matters are common and familiar to Lao people. Unlike these texts, the Days of the Animals were applied in the text on days for seeing one’s relatives. This may indicate that this text was rarely used and unfamiliar to the people, but nevertheless comprehensible to local scholars. As such, anyone wanting to follow the instructions for appropriate days to visit their relatives – especially with the purpose of asking for advice – must then have meet with a respected scholar in advance for guidance. Respected local scholars knowledgeable in this field are mostly former monks.

The contents of the text concerning auspicious days for seeing one’s relatives are strikingly different from the two previous texts. The compiler used animals as figures of simile to explain the dynamics on each day, as shown in the table below:

Table 4.3: Days for seeing one’s relatives

Name	Day	Representation		Outcome for visitor
		Visitor	Visited	
<i>Chai</i>	Day of the <b>Rat</b>	Cow	Tiger	Not good
<i>Pao</i>	Day of the Ox	Garuda	Naga	Good
<i>Nyi</i>	Day of the Tiger	Cat	<b>Rat</b>	Good
<i>Mao</i>	Day of the Rabbit	Fish	<b>Monkey</b>	Not good
<i>Si</i>	Day of the Big Snake	Lion	Elephant	Good
<i>Sai</i>	Day of the Small Snake	Barking deer	<b>Dog</b>	Not good

<i>Sa-nga</i>	Day of the Horse	Tiger	Cow	Good
<i>Mot</i>	Day of the Goat	Naga	Garuda	Not good
<i>San</i>	Day of the <b>Monkey</b>	<b>Rat</b>	Cat	Not good
<i>Hao</i>	Day of the Cock	<b>Monkey</b>	Fish	Good
<i>Set</i>	Day of the <b>Dog</b>	Elephant	Lion	Not good
<i>Khai</i>	Day of the Pig	Barking deer	<b>Dog</b>	Not good

This table shows that three animals – Rat, Monkey, and Dog – were used as the names of the Days. Furthermore, they partly appear in representations as both the visitor and the visited – the Rat and the Monkey – represent both parties, whereas the Dog represents only the party of the visited. The table also shows that people have five promising choices within the twelve animals days to visit their relatives. In short, people have limited positive opportunities to do so, especially if they are in need of urgent help. If they need help on the Day of the Dog, for instance, they must wait two days until the Day of the Ox if they wish to follow these instructions or guidelines.

All the Days of the Animals which are thought to be inauspicious for visiting people have small animals as their names, whereas auspicious days are marked by large ones. One of the good days, however, has a small animal as its name: the Day of the Cock. Even though a cock is small it is about as good at flying as a duck, so it might be regarded as symbol of sacred power that can guide people to their goals. Lao tradition recognizes that the cock crows three times at night: the first time is called *kai khan kok* (ໄກ່ຂັນກົກ), the second, *kai khan kang* (ໄກ່ຂັນກາງ), and the last one, *kai khan loei* (ໄກ່ຂັນເລີຍ). The *kai khan loei* is the time that the cock consistently crows before dawn until sunrise and the time when most people in the village rise to begin their day. A cock is used as the name of the Day of Animal and its crowing voice is a natural alarm ringing to wake people from their sleep.

#### d) Naming a newly-born child

The text provides instructions on how to name a newly-born child as follows: “ບັດນີ້ຈາໃສ່ຊື່ໄດ້ກັນອຍເກີດກ່ອນແລ. ເກີດວັນ ໑ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ບຸນກອງ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ທອງສີ. ເກີດວັນ ໒ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ບາລະໂກ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ໂສມດີ. ວັນ ໓ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ພູມມາ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ນາງໝໍທິຊາ. ວັນ ໔ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ນັນທາ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ນາງອິກດີ. ວັນ ໕ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ມະຫານິນ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ສິມມາ ດີ. ວັນ ໖ ຜູ້ຊາຍຊື່ໂສມ ຜູ້ຍິງຊື່ເກສີ. ເກີດວັນ ໗ ຊາຍຊື່ວະໂລ ຍິງຊື່ທຸມມາ.” The text thus advises:

Naming a newly-born child: If born on the first day of the week (Sunday), a boy should be named Bunkòng, a girl should be named Thòngsi; on the second day (Monday), a boy named Balako, a girl named Somdi; on the third day (Tuesday), a boy named Phumma, a girl named Mòthisa; on the fourth day

(Wednesday), a boy named Nantha, a girl named Okdi; on the fifth day (Thursday), a boy named Mahanin, a girl named Simma; on the sixth day (Friday), a boy named Som, a girl named Kesi; on the seventh day (Saturday), a boy named Valo, a girl named Thumma.

This raises a relatively obvious question: if people follow the instructions above will not an overwhelmingly large number of people share the same name? Suppose a village comprises five hundred inhabitants where men who are born on a Sunday necessarily receive the name Bunkòng, and Thòngsi for women born on the same day; this would mean that there would be many people with the exact same name. This occurrence, though, is actually quite rare, thereby suggesting that these instructions regarding the naming of children are not obligatory. However, these names, Bunkòng and Thòngsi, are both compound words composed of two words each: *bun* and *kòng*, and *thòng* and *si*, respectively. Men's names will usually contain either Bun or Kòng in their name, such as Bunta, Bunmi, Sombun, Khambun, Kòngta, Kòngphaeng, and Khamkòng. Similarly, women often with the words Thòng or Si in their name, for instance, Thòngdi, Thòngphan, Buathòng, Taengthòng, Siphān, Sida, Somsī, and Chòmsi.

It seems that some of the names appearing in the explanation are derived from Pali, such - such as Phumma, Nantha, Mahanin, and Thumma. Only one name, Som, is formed with a single word/syllable, which suggests a name of traditional Lao origin. Traditionally, a Lao child's name is first formed by monosyllabic words, such as Da (ດາ), Si (ສີ), Khüa (ເຄືອ), Kham (ຄຳ), Kaeo (ແກ້ວ), and Sòn (ສອນ). Each of these names is then usually combined with other words to form more specified names, which consist of two words/syllables or more, such as Thòngda, Chanda, Chansida, Sitha, Somsī, Buakhüa, Khüavan, and so forth. These specifications are usually placed onto names when young boys and girls enrol as pupils in kindergarten. However, the compiler of this text used Pali words in his work to indicate that he was trying to introduce a new way to give people polysyllabic names without using word combinations.

#### e) The first annual thunder

One part of this manuscript deals with the first annual thunder, a natural phenomenon believed to affect cultivation and development in the world. One excerpt from the text reads:

ຮ້ອງກ້າບົວລະພາເທວະດາໄຂປະຕູເຜັກ ຈັກແພ້ຄົນທັງຫຼາຍ ຫົວປິດິນບໍ່ຫຼາຍ ຫຼ້າປິດິນຈຶ່ງມີຫຼາຍ  
ເຂົ້າດີທຸກແຫ່ງແລ ... ຮ້ອງກ້າທັກຂົນເທວະດາໄຂປະຕູໄພ ປີນັ້ນຈັກແລ້ງນັກ ຄົນຈັກຕາຍຢາກເຂົ້າ

ມາກນັກແລ ບໍ່ດີແລ ... ຮ້ອງກ້າປັດສິມເທວະດາໄຂປະຕູເງິນ ນ້ຳຈັກແຮງນັກ ຄົນທັງຫຼາຍຈັກຮີບ  
 ເລວກັນ ທຸກແລ ... ຮ້ອງກ້າອຸດອນເທວະດາໄຂປະຕູທອງ ປີນັ້ນຝົນຕົກຫຼາຍນັກ ເຂົ້າໄຮ່[ເຂົ້າ]ນາ  
 ດີນັກແລ ຄົນທັງຫຼາຍເປັນສຸກມາກນັກແລ.

[If it begins to] thunder in the East (ບົວລະພາ), a god (ເທວະດາ) will open an iron gate (ປະຕູເຫຼັກ), affecting all people seriously. Not much rain at the beginning of the year, much more rain at the end of the year. [People of all] locations enjoy a plentiful rice harvest. [...] [If it begins to] thunder in the South (ທັກຂິນ), a god will open a fire gate (ປະຕູໄຟ), bringing a severe drought. A number of people will be famine-stricken and die. It is an undesirable year [...] [If it begins to] thunder in the West (ປັດສິມ), a god will open a silver gate (ປະຕູເງິນ). There will be a severe flood and many people will fight with one another. It is a year of suffering[...] [If it begins to] thunder in the North (ອຸດອນ), the God opens a copper gate (ປະຕູທອງ). The years with much rain are the years in which all people [can enjoy] a good rice harvest, living and working in peace and contentment.

Table 4.4: The first annual thunder and its effects

Directions	Doors to be opened by a god	Effects
East	An iron gate (ປະຕູເຫຼັກ)	Much rain at the end of the year; fruitful harvest of rice.
Southeast	A wind gate (ປະຕູລົມ)	Not much rain; extremely-strong wine; warfare will break out; fruitful harvest of rice.
South	A fire gate (ປະຕູໄຟ)	A severe drought; people will died of hunger.
Southwest	A stone gate (ປະຕູຫີນ)	Serious diseases; fruitful harvest of rice.
West	A silver gate (ປະຕູເງິນ)	A severe flood; a serious quarrel between people to be broken out.
Northwest	A golden gate (ປະຕູຄໍາ)	Various serious diseases.
North	A copper gate (ປະຕູທອງ)	Much rain; good harvest of rice; living and working in peace
Northeast	A ground gate (ປະຕູດິນ)	Various serious diseases.

The statements made in this manuscript may or may not be true. However, the interesting point is that this information might not solely be based on imagination, but rather on observations about the directions of the first annual thunder and the following phenomena over a long period of time. People may have experienced that a specific direction of thunder at the beginning of a year was followed by certain phenomena. People then tried to use this information to predict the future. Even more remarkable is that the

message quoted above warns people to prepare to face challenges that may arise in the future. In other words, their ancestors prepared against natural disasters in order to survive. Warnings like these helped people to be more careful in order to avoid suffering resulting from various types of natural disasters.

Another interesting point is that this manuscript seems to be the property of another person, not of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. The colophon on the second page reads: “[This] manuscript of the calculation of auspicious/inauspicious days belongs to Hua Chao Phumma of Vat Saen. It was written in [Chulasakarat] 1270 (AD 1908).” (ທັງສີຫາມີ້ຮ້າຍມີ້ດີຂອງຫົວເຈົ້າພູມມາວັດແສນຫົວມີ້ໄດ້ຂຽນແຕ່ເມື່ອປີ ໑໒໗໐ [ປີ]ເປີກສັນເນີ). This indicates that the owner might have knowledge related to astrology, and he should therefore be recognized as one of the local scholars. However, the reason why this manuscript became part of Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s personal possessions shall also be discussed. This manuscript was not given to him according to the custom of manuscript production in order to foster charity (see Section 3.3 on “Sponsors, Donors and Scribes” in Chapter 2). That being the case, we would expect a colophon confirming this, but there is no such colophon. One possibility is that the former owner knew the contents of this book very well – maybe even by heart – and later decided to give it away. Another possibility is that after the former owner’s death, his relatives might not have known how to use the book and therefore gave it to others or handed it to Sathu Nyai Khamchan directly.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0057**

This manuscript is undated and entitled *Pi Koet* (ປີເກີດ), which means “birth year”. The manuscript comprises 45 palm leaves that measure 30 cm in length and 4.8 cm in width. The text is written in the Tham-Lao script, with 4 lines per page, and its pagination follows Sanskrit orthography (the combination of Sanskrit consonants and vowels).

The content of this manuscript is a type of omen or prediction of things to come (*lang* ລາງ), which can bring, according to beliefs, both good and evil tidings. Anyone confronted with such an omen can assume that their guardian spirit is trying to communicate with them. Such signs remind people to be more mindful of their own lives (Thongkham 2003: 295). Even today, Lao people believe in both good and bad omens (*lang di lang hai* ລາງດີລາງຮ້າຍ). However, most people do not know the circumstances of such omens, so a fortune teller is often consulted.

It is possible that, before Buddhism was introduced to Laos, fortune telling was already popular among the people who were living in these territories. Animism and magic might have also been daily practices. In this regard, some Buddhist scholars might have commandeered parts of other belief systems as vehicles to support the dissemination of the

Buddha's teachings. Therefore, it is not unusual to find fortune telling and magic written on palm leaves which are believed to have been the favored writing support for recording Buddhist teachings. Manuscript BAD-13-1-0057 is one of palm-leaf manuscripts containing non-Buddhist teaching subjects. The manuscript bears numerous predictions concerning both the former lives and future circumstances of a person according to the animal year in which they were born. The text on the first page reads:

ຈັກກ່າວ ບຸກຄະລະຜູ້ໃດເກີດປີໃຈຢູ່ດ້ວຍເຈົ້າສີທາດ ພໍ່ແມ່[ຂອງ]ມັນບໍ່ໄດ້ກິນແຮງ. ເມື່ອຍັງນ້ອຍເປັນ  
ທຸກຮ້າຍນັກ, ໄດ້ ໓໐ ປີຮ້າຍທີ ໑, [ແລະ]ໄດ້ ໖໐ ປີຮ້າຍທີ ໑. ໃຫ້ສະດັບຮັບຟັງທຳມະເທສະໜາ  
[ແລະ]ຮັກສາສິນ ຍັງຈັກໄດ້ ໘໐ ປີ. [ມັນ]ຈັກຕາຍເມື່ອເດືອນ ໖ ອອກຄ່ຳ ໑ ບໍ່ຢ່າຊະແລ. ເມື່ອກ່ອນພູມ  
ໄດ້ເປັນພົມ, ຈຸດຕິຈາກພົມນັ້ນໄດ້ເປັນຊ້າງສັດທັນ, ຈຸດຕິຈາກຊ້າງສັດທັນນັ້ນໄດ້ເປັນຄົນ...

[I would like to] say that anyone born in the *chai* year (Year of the Rat) is someone who has stayed with *chao si that* (a Lao word representing Prince Siddhattha). Their parents could not look after them when they were young, and they suffered from serious illness. At the ages of 30 and 60, his fate will be the same as that of his childhood. Hearing sermons and observing the precepts [can remove this bad luck and he can] live up to 80 years. He will die in the sixth lunar month on the first day of the waxing moon. In two former lives, he was a *phom* (Brahmin deity), later reborn as an elephant called Satthan. After dying as an elephant, he was reborn as a human in this life.

The compiler of this text explains that parents whose children were born in the Year of the Rat will not be looked after by their children. This clearly demonstrates the existing relationships present within a Lao family; in essence, children are expected to care for their parents when they become old (Thongkham 2003: 424). However, this might not have much effect if the parents did not take care of their children when they were young. They may grow up, but not healthy enough to earn a living. In consequence, they are not able to provide their parents with a comfortable lifestyle during their final days.

According to the text, not only did the people in ancient times have health problems when they were very young, but they also had such serious problems when they became adults (30 years old) and elderly (60 years old). This account clearly demonstrates very important milestones during one's lifetime. Upon reaching the age of 30, those who were married were required to pay a lot attention to their family (*sang khòpkhua* ສ້າງຄອບຄົວ) in order to support them. This especially pertained to work harding in rice fields to produce a bountiful harvest of rice. Indeed, a Lao proverb stipulates: “*sam-sip pi mīa na kòn kai* ສາມສິບປີ ເມື່ອນາກ່ອນໄກ່”, or “a 30 year-old goes to work in the rice field before dawn.” Despite

this, the text says that anyone born in the Year of the Rat will become seriously ill when they reach 30 years of age. The text seems to warn of danger or possible harm due to carelessness. Usually, a person who abandons his or herself to something will forget to take care of his or herself. Similarly, any person who is extremely enthusiastic about work at his/her rice field goes to work while it is still dark. As a result, harm may befall that person on the way to his/her rice field if he/she does not pay careful sufficient attention.

A Lao proverb says: “*hok-sip pi khai kò khang bò khai kò khang* ຫົກສິບປີ ໄຂ້ກໍຄາງບໍ່ໄຂ້ກໍຄາງ” or “[a person who is] 60 years old always complains about his health, even when he is not ill.” Another proverb says, “*thao ma laeo pen dek noi* ເຖົ້າມາແລ້ວ ເປັນເດັກນ້ອຍ” meaning “[when a person] gets old they become childish.” When the text addresses the elderly directly, it is more to tell them how to take care of their body than to tell them about their past and future life. Like young children, the physiques of the elderly are not the same as those of young men. Old people experience pain more often than younger people, so the compiler of this text provides them with useful advice in the form of predictions to follow.

In fact, numerous occurrences happen to human beings, such as natural disasters, which caused people in ancient times to believe that there were supernatural beings who brought to them both good and bad omens. Therefore, they tried to find their own ways to solve this issue in order to avoid and remove bad luck, as well as welcome good fortune. One of the purposes of creating fortune-telling was to encourage a person facing misfortune to find a way to continue his/her life actively.

The above-quoted text predicts the future of people according to the Year of the Animal in which they were born. Furthermore, their circumstances changed depending on how old they were. People born in different years might have fates both similar to and different from each other. For instance, a person born in the first year of the cycle, the Year of the Rat, will suffer from serious illness and be confronted with bad luck three times during his/her lifetime; in essence, during early childhood, and at the ages of 30 and 60. A person who was born in the last animal year, the Year of the Pig, will suffer from serious illness or face consistent bad luck many times during his/her lifetime: in early childhood, and at the ages of 15, 16, 25, and between 50 and 70 years. Some consequences of people who were born in the Year of the Rat and Year of the Pig are summarized in the table below:

Table 4.5: The predictions of two birth years

Year	Stay with	Harsh time	What to do	Past existences
<i>Chai</i> (Year of the Rat) (A)	Chao Sithat (Pali: <i>siddhatha</i> )	Early childhood, 30, 60 years.	- to listen to sermons - to observe the precepts	- an elephant - a deity
<i>Khai</i> (Year of the Pig) (B)	Teme (Pali: <i>temiya</i> )	Early childhood, 15, 16, 25 years, and between 50 and 70 years.	- to listen to the Teme <sup>94</sup> story - to release crab, fish, snail - to make merit	- an elephant

This table shows the future of a person (A) who was born in the Year of the Rat would be similar to that of Chao Sithat; he/she must listen sermons and observe the precepts in order to prevent harsh events during his/her lifetime. Person (B) who was born in the Year of the Pig would be similar to that of Teme; they need to listen to the Teme story, release crabs, fish and snails, and make merit in order to avoid severe hardships over the course of their lifetime. The circumstances of persons A and B are both related to the Jataka stories. This suggests that the person who wrote this text tried to introduce his audiences to the circle of rebirth. This means that when a person dies, they are reborn, and this process of death and rebirth continues until *nibbāna* has been reached. This relates to the Law of Kamma (*kot haeng kam* ກົດແຫ່ງກຳ), which stipulates that one's rebirth as a certain kind of being is the result of the *kamma* accumulated throughout previous existences. The difference is that A and B were both born as elephants in their previous lives; however, two of A's past existences is described in the text, whereas only one past life of B is mentioned.

In addition to the circle of rebirth and the Law of Kamma, the writer informs his audience how to protect themselves in unexpected circumstances. Person A must listen to sermons and observe the precepts in order to prevent themselves from experiencing hardship, whereas person B needs to hear the story of Teme, release particular animals and make merit for the same purpose. The tasks of A and B are based on three common tasks of lay people: to give alms, to observe the precepts, and to listen to sermons (ໃຫ້ທານ, ຮັກສາສິນ ແລະຟັງທຳ). This suggests that the text was composed by a person who was quite knowledgeable about Buddhism as well as social and cultural matters. The text itself is a

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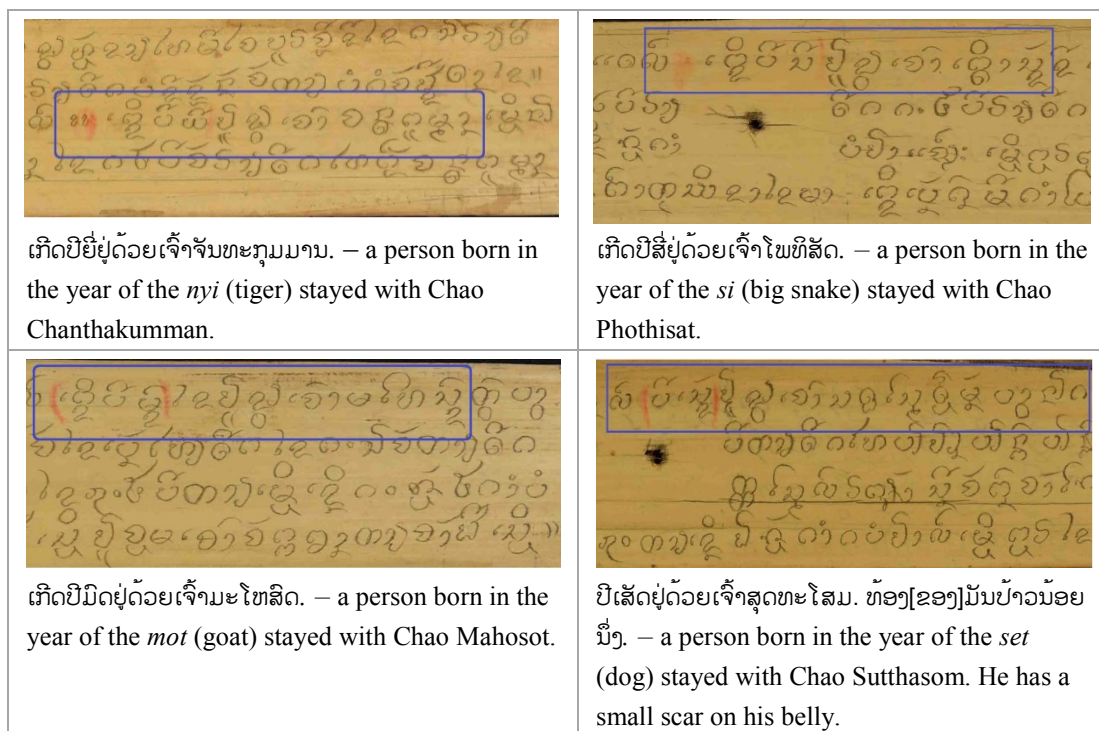
<sup>94</sup> Teme is a Lao word representing the story of *temiya* which is also known as Mūga-Pakkha Jātaka. This is Jātaka 538, and is one of the last ten Stories of the Buddha's past lives. For more detail, see Cowell 1907 pp. 1–18 (Vol. VI).



combination of two main beliefs: Buddhism and astrology. The co-existence of these two disciplines in these texts acts as a microcosm for the spiritual and secular development of Luang Prabang and Laos as a whole; in short, it shows how traditional scholarship and religion overlap and coincide with one another.

The manuscript containing the astrological text found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan clearly reflects its importance. The manuscript was kept in the same cabinet as other manuscripts containing religious texts and stored beside an altar of Buddha images (*han pha* ຮ້າມພະ). If this was made when Sathu Nyai Khamchan was alive, the manuscript was one of the non-religious manuscripts that were under his attention. A monk who believes that prediction is a suitable practise may use a text like this to perform a ceremony of predictions. He may not be asked to use such texts frequently, but whenever he is asked to do this, he gains much more respect from the one requested him to do so. Remarkably, the names of the twelve Animal Years in this text are marked with red ink. Some of them can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 4.1: Sample of a non-religious manuscript used for predictions



This figure clearly demonstrates that the text was read probably by a monk, or at least a Buddhist scholar. It might have been used for reading in order to learn its contents, make predictions, or both. All additional marks are used to indicate the beginning of each of the twelve predictions. The person who used and marked up this text might have been

unable to remember all of the contents of the text, meaning that he found ways to help him in this task. The marks also suggest that the text was used for the private purposes of a person who marked it and for response to predictions that he might be asked to foretell the future. However, this performance is similar to various ways of marking up the reading of a book in the present day.

### 3. Medical treatises and magic

According to the traditions of the Lao Buddhists of Luang Prabang and of Laos as a whole, men are required to be ordained as monks – or at least as novices – at some stage in their lives. Lao Buddhists consider ordination an essential rite in preparation for adult life. Men should become ordained as monks for days or months before they get married. As members of a monastery, monks and novices must follow monastic regulations and conform to the advice of their teachers. However, they come from home communities (their families and villages) where a wide range of magic and animistic beliefs are still practiced. As such, they bring their original beliefs and practices to the monastery. A monk who conducts a monastic life for a long time is recognized as an able and virtuous person (*khon mi bun buat* ຄົນມີບຸນບວດ). As a result, he becomes a centre of ritual and gains much respect from monastic members and laypeople alike. It seems that this respect is not only due to his lengthy stay in the monkhood (*mi phansa kae* ມີພັນສາແກ່), and good conduct (*patibat di patibat sòp* ປະຕິບັດດີປະຕິບັດຊອບ), but because he is believed to have magical powers (*khatha-akhom* ຄາຖາອາຄົມ) as well. This might be similar to Terwiel's observations that Buddhism in the villages of Thailand incorporates and, indeed, is based on beliefs in magic and animism. Thus, as Terwiel (2012: 20) points out:

... while the Sangha and Buddhism therefore pervade religious life in the villages, this does not necessarily mean that the villager accepts the philosophical tenets of Buddhism or adheres to its soteriology. The Buddhist concepts can be interpreted in such a way that they fit in with magico-animistic presuppositions.

From Terwiel's statement, it appears that monks are not only required to have in-depth knowledge about Buddhist subjects, but they are asked for their skills in non-Buddhist matters as well. It is unsurprising to find a monk chanting Pali words – or holy texts – as an incantation to bless holy water while lighting candles for laypeople. The holy texts are recognized by the laypeople as possessing magical powers. However, the Pali or the holy texts might not be indicative of magic, but rather their magic comes is derived from other

sources. Indeed, Ishii (1986: 21) contends that: “the magic of the *parit* stems from three factors: the social recognition that *parit* should be chanted for certain purposes (e.g. blessing); the existence of an established formula for their chanting; and the sanctity attributed to the chanter.” When laypeople need holy water, for instance, they ask respected monks for help. Accordingly, it seems that some laypeople understand the incantations as magic or a manifestation of magical power.

Generally speaking, the traditional medicines of Laos were commonly applied in conjunction with magic spells. Most people recognized as practitioners of traditional medicine (*mò ya phünmüang* ພໍ່ຢາພື້ນເມືອງ) have their own spells and incantations that they recite before using materials such as sacred objects to practice their craft. Currently, a number of members of the Lao Sangha members are very experienced in using various types of traditional medicines. To this end, Tomecko (2009: 11) notes that:

It is not uncommon to find Buddhist monks and nuns who are practicing herbalists or for Buddhist monasteries to offer health services to both monastic and lay communities. This holds particularly true for the monks and nuns of the Lao Forest Tradition of Theravada Buddhism, who are well known for their skill in meditation and their deep knowledge of herbal cures.

The monks are believed to be experts both in terms of their medicinal skills as well as their morality (*mi sintham* ມີສິນທໍາ). Therefore, they treat the gravely ill with both traditional medicine and compassion (*mettatham* ເມດຕາທໍາ). This knowledge may have been part of Lao culture since ancient times. People confronted with health problems or those of their relatives turn to monks for help. Monks who are experts in medicine, moreover, are often capable of carrying out the treatment procedures in lieu of a medical doctor. Tomecko (*ibid.* 11) further explains that:

It is said that some of them can even make a diagnosis, and discover a suitable method of treatment, through insights gained during meditation. Forest monasteries frequently have a resident monk doctor who is responsible for the preparation of pills and other traditional medications. He might also include psychological counselling or the use of sacred Buddhist chants to heal the sick.

According to this account, some monks have experience in analysing the symptoms of a disease and finding suitable methods of treatment. Such knowledge may be gained during meditation, instead of scientific research, studying through rote memorization or learning

through applied methods. Nowadays, some people with health problems untreatable by modern methods turn to monks for help. If their health problems are serious enough, their relatives will bring their clothes to the monks to represent the absent person symbolically.

Of course, these doctors of traditional medicine qua monks or vice versa, whichever may more accurately be the case, did not use any kind of medicine in the modern sense. Whenever sick people and/or their relatives came to ask for treatment, the monks find the appropriate medicinal substances. In fact, it is believed that each specific part of a plant or tree – for instance, the root (*hak* ຮາກ, *hua* ຫົວ), bark (*püak* ເປືອກ, *kap* ກາບ), leaf (*bai* ໃບ), flower (*dòk* ດອກ), fruit (*mak* ໝາກ), seed (*met* ເມັດ, *nai* ໃບ), and so forth – can be used to create medicinal substances. These substances have their own times during which they are efficacious. In other words, they do not necessarily work if they have not been harvested at an auspicious time.

Since, naturally, some monks were unable to memorize exactly which herbs and substances were to be used for which diseases, indigenous medicinal herbs and their uses were record in palm-leaf and paper manuscripts. Some of these later ended up being kept privately in monastic buildings, for instance, in collections like the one found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode (BAD-13-1-0056, BAD-13-2-002, BAD-13-2-005). The presence of such manuscripts suggest that Sathu Nyai Khamchan might have been one of the senior monks in Luang Prabang interested in traditional medicinal treatments.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0056**

This manuscript is undated and entitled *Thòng Sang* (ທ້ອງຊາງ), which means swollen belly. It refers to a condition that afflicts children resulting from malnourishment. The manuscript comprises 24 palm leaves that measure 29 cm in length and 5 cm in width. The text was written in Tham-Lao with 4 lines per page and its pagination is in the form of Lao numerals.

The contents of this manuscript describe the types of medicines used to relieve a variety of illnesses. A common symptom or illness is the hiccups. Although most the cases of hiccups go away on their own, a local scholar of Luang Prabang recorded this prescription for the treatment of the hiccups:

ຢາ[ດີ]ສະເອີ ເອົາຫົວ[ຫຍ້າ]ແຫ້ວໝູ ໓ ຫົວ, ຕາອ້ອຍດໍາ ໓ ຕາ, ເຂົ້າຈີ້າ ໓ ເມັດ ຕໍາ[ໃສ່ກັນແລ້ວ]  
ພິກ[ດ້ວຍ]ແພ ແຊນ້າໃຫ້ກິນ ດີແລ.

Medicine for treating the hiccups: collect three tubers of nut grass, three eyes of black sugarcane, and three seeds of rice (not glutinous rice). Pestle them

together [in a mortar] covered by a piece of cloth soaked in water. [Then,] have [the afflicted] drink it. [The hiccups will be] gone.

Similar to other traditional medicinal substances mentioned in other manuscripts, no details concerning the substances are mentioned. We do not know how big or small the tubers of the nut grass and the eyes of the black sugarcane are supposed to be. The rice seeds mentioned, while considerably more common compared to the other two ingredients, are not clearly defined in terms of whether milled (*khao san* ເຂົ້າສານ) or un-milled rice (*khao püak* ເຂົ້າເປືອກ) is to be used. Clearly, this could pose many problems for anyone trying to put the prescription into practice. Another question that arises is why the number “3” is used for all three ingredients, despite that considerable variance in their features. Why? It could have to do with numeral traditions within Lao rituals, and the saying, “*khik yu khu ni* ຄືກຢູ່ກູ່ນີ”, which translates as “odd stays, even escapes.” Basically, this means that odd numbers are auspicious, while even numbers are thought to be inauspicious. This can still be seen today, as monks are almost always invited to perform chant rituals at various ceremonies in odd, not even, numbers.

There are at least three possible reasons explaining why no further details are provided about the concoctions mentioned above: 1) the scribe has no knowledge about medicine at all and was only responsible for copying the text; 2) the scribe is not a traditional medical doctor, although he may have had some experience with these medicines; 3) the scribe is a doctor of traditional medicine, so he knows the recipes and prescriptions by heart and, thus, has no need to write them down. The first reason is the least plausible, while the second possibility seems a bit more realistic, as it seems likely that a monk lacking literacy would have asked someone skilled in this matter to take on the task on his behalf. The third possibility is also quite unlikely, as some traditional medicine doctors who can read and write kept their own private records. Hence they felt there was no need to record information that they already knew and were confident they would not forget it.

A doctor of traditional medicine, who knows everything about medicinal substances, records the substances without the details may depend on the limitation of writing materials, as well as the traditional way of learning. The former is easy to understand, but the latter needs to be explained. Some Lao scholars frequently taught knowledge to people indirectly based on a simple question and answer format; in effect, “What/where/who questions” only, not “Why/how questions”. This is because answers to former kinds of questions are easy to understand, while the latter need to be explained and a ceremony of honorarium must be performed. This is supported by the Lao proverb:

ຢາກກິນເຂົ້າ	ໃຫ້ປູກໃສ່ພະລານຫີນ (໑)
ຢາກມີສິນ	ໃຫ້ຂ້າພໍ່ຕີແມ່ (໒)
ຢາກໃຫ້ພີ່ນ້ອງມາແວ່	ໃຫ້ຂ້າໝູ່ດຽວກັນ. (໓)
If you want to eat rice	then plant it in a field of stone (1)
[If you] need to follow the precepts	you have to kill your father and beat your mother. (2)
[If you] need your relatives to come to visit you	you have to kill [all of] your own friends. (3)

This proverb contain matters for investigation (*banha phasit* ບັນຫາພາສິດ) that require a genuinely thorough examination. Anyone who simply hears and then believes this proverb will make a terrible mistake due to insufficient knowledge. If they follow the first phrase they will not make a serious fault, but the people of the town may begin to call him crazy. As long as the act is committed in private then no such serious repercussions will be incurred. If any person follows the second and the third phrases, they will certainly become a murderer, then be arrested and sentenced to death according to the criminal law of his/her country.

The doctor of traditional medicine might have told the names of the herbs to be used as medicinal substances in the same way that other scholars applied for their works. In other words, anyone interested in learning from the traditional medicine doctors need to request to become their student. If the request was granted, that person had to perform a ceremony to pay respect to his teacher (ຕັ້ງຄາຍ). One proverb concerning this matter says, “ຮຽນນໍາພໍ່ກໍ່ນໍາຄູ” which means “learn with father, begin with a teacher”. Furthermore, it is believed that traditional medicines have no effect unless the doctors carry out a ritual of incantation, an ability passed down from teacher to student over many generations. Manuscript BAD-13-2-005 provides us insight into the matter below:

ວັນ ໑ ແຮມ ໑໓ ຄໍ່າ ເດືອນ ໖ ປີເຕົ້າສີ ໄດ້ຕັ້ງຄາຍສິດເອົາຢາອັນວິເສດນໍາຫົວພໍ່ທົດ[...] ບ້ານ ຫຼັກຄໍາ ໄວ້ເປັນມຸງຄຸງ.

Translation: [It was] the first day of the week (Sunday), the thirteenth day of the waning moon, year of the *tao si* (tiger). [I] performed a ceremony of paying respect to my teacher, Hua Phò Thit [...] of Ban Lak Kham (village), asking permission to learn the best medicine from him and then carry on its propitiousness.

Here, the scribe only refers to the formalization of the relationship between him and his new teacher. We do not know what kind of medicine he learnt, only that it was the “best medicine” (*ya viset* ຢາວິເສດ). He further writes that he learnt such a medicine for carrying on the medicine’s propitiousness (*pen sili mungkhun* ໄວ້ເປັນສິລິມຸງຄຸນ). However, he provides us with details about the objects used in the ceremony for paying respect to his teacher. See the table below:

Table 4.6: Items used in the ceremony formalizing the relationship between teacher and student

No.	Item	Remark
1	ເງິນ ໕ ບາດ	5 baht (75 grams) of silver
2	[...]	
3	ທຽນເຫຼັ້ມບາດ ຄູ່ ໑ ວຽນຫົວເຫຼັ້ມ ໑	Two fifteen-gram candles and one head-circle candle
4	ແພວາ ໑	One towel
5	ພວກຫົວ ໑	One hat
6	ເຫຼົ້າກ້ອງ ໑	One small bottle of liquor
7	ເຂົ້າຖ້ວຍ ໑	One bowl of rice
8	ໄຂ່ ໒ ໜ່ວຍ [ປັ້ນ] ເຂົ້າຕາງກໍໄດ້	Two eggs If the eggs cannot be obtained, two glutinous rice balls can be used instead.
9	ເກືອຫໍ່ ໑	Salt wrapped in a piece of banana leaf
10	ຊວຍ ໑ [ອັນ]	One funnel

This table shows that ten specific items are required for the ceremony in question. Aside from the one illegible item, the attainability of which cannot be assessed for obvious reasons, all the items on the list are commonplace items that are easy to find. An alternative is offered for item 8, however, where it is acceptable to replace two eggs with two glutinous rice balls. Traditionally, every family in Laos keeps poultry, especially chickens and ducks, because of the value placed on both meat and eggs. The meat and eggs of chickens are not only used for food, but also as objects required things for ritual ceremonies. Lao proverbs also provide us with such information, for instance, naming the importance of “*lao hai kai to* ເຫຼົ້າໄຫໄກ່ໂຕ”, a jar of liquor and a chicken, and “*lao kòng khai nuai* ເຫຼົ້າກ້ອງໄຂ່ໜ່ວຍ”, a small bottle of liquor and an egg. These proverbs refer to the items required to perform of certain ritual ceremonies, probably ceremonies organized to beg the pardon of the spirits on behalf of someone who has sinned, or to ask the ancestors for forgiveness of a serious offense. Furthermore, some people prepare trays (*pha busa* ພາບູຊາ) containing food and liquor as symbolic offerings to the guardian spirits of a house, rice

field, tree, or other location, in order to ask permission to frequent such places (Tomecko 2009: 22; Nhouy 1959f: 248). Such practices are still observed in present-day Laos.

In ancient times Lao people were confronted with natural phenomena and various diseases. Deadly epidemics occurred frequently, sometimes killing all of the poultry. In such times, there was a shortage of both chickens and eggs for these ceremonies. It seems reasonable to posit that he was writing the text during such a time given that substitutes for the chicken and eggs are specified. It is, of course, also possible that he merely copied the text from another manuscript, a question that will hopefully be pursued in more depth within Lao studies in the future.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-005**

This paper manuscript is untitled, but its text relates to traditional medicine and incantations and includes other notes and reports. One of its texts is dated Chulasakarat 1254 (AD 1892). The manuscript comprises 60 pages, 25 of which are blank. The length of this manuscript is 36 cm and its width is 11.3 cm. The texts were written with white chalk on darkened paper in the Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan scripts with 2–4 lines per page and without pagination.

This text presents a variety of herbal ingredients. Usually, only part of a plant is taken – for instance, the flower, fruit, seed, and so forth – in order to create medicinal components. Manuscript BAD-13-2-005 provides information regarding how to make medicine from a coconut. One part of the manuscript reads:

ໝາກພ້າວທ້າວຕັດຖ່ອງ ເອົາຖ່ອງທົວຖ້ຳຖ່ອງກິ້ນ ຊູດແລ້ວຂົ້ວໃສ່ [...] ກິນ.

Cut the ripe coconut into two parts, keeping the top part and throwing away the bottom part. Scrape it out and fry [it] with [...] then,] eat it.

Through this information, we can see that only the top-half of a whole ripe coconut is used to craft medicine. There is no concrete scientific evidence, however, which demonstrates that the top-half of a ripe coconut has different properties than the bottom. It is possible that this fact vis-à-vis the lack of differentiation between different parts of the coconut can be extrapolated to a large variety of herbs used in the traditional medicine of Laos. The Lao words *hua* (ທົວ: head, front part, top) and *kon* (ກິ້ນ: hip, bottom) may pertain to psychological and ideological aspects of social value. In fact, numerous compound words indicating the more valuable part of certain objects, contain the word *hua*, such as *hua sim*



(the back of the ordaining hall), *hua hūan* (the back of the house), *hua bòn nòn* (the place where people lay their head to sleep) and *hua tiang* (the end of the bed, in essence, where one's feet rest). Since *hua* is recognized as respectful areas, touching other people's *hua* is forbidden in Lao society. In addition, all types of auspicious things must be kept in high places above head level, *thoeng hua* (ເທິງຫົວ).

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-007**

The text of this paper manuscript pertains to astrology, incantations, auspicious and inauspicious moments, and traditional medicine. The manuscript consists of 118 pages, of which 69 pages are blank. Some blank pages seem to contain erased texts. The length of this manuscript is 34 cm with a width of 11.5 cm. The texts were written with white chalk on darkened paper in the Tham-Lao and Tham-Lü scripts with 2–7 lines per page, and no pagination.

Generally speaking, a Buddhist monk is not allowed to use magic, but some monks secretly engage in such acts in private. Not only do monks study of the teachings of the Buddha teachings, but they are also required to study secular subjects in order to gain knowledge to help the laypeople cope with hardship in their lives. Nhouy(1959: 239), for instance, records that: “They [the monks] would be consulted on every occasion of everyday life: about birth, sickness, death, dreams and omens of the sky. They would answer either in parable or quote the sayings of the Master. Their advice was scrupulously followed and respected”. He further observes that monks were – and, indeed, still are the ones who often recommend the name given to a newly-born child. Even today, if a child, and sometimes even an adult, exhibits any symptom of mental illness, then monks will advise for their name to be changed. This indicates that some Lao people still follow the tradition of naming people, that is, if any person always has problems with his or her health that person is believed having incorrectly been named. Nhouy (ibid. 1959: 250) additionally documents that: “Among the small pieces of jewellery given by the parents, which are to be fastened around the neck or the wrist of the child, there is a golden or silver plate on which a few sacred characters or even a whole *gāthā* has been engraved by a monk.” This indicates that Lao monks who lived in the first half of the twentieth century were familiar with the practices of magic (Pali: *gāthā*; Lao: *khatha* ຄາຕາ) popular at the time.

The high number of paper manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode which discuss magic is not unusual. Some of these manuscripts contain Buddhist words or the teachings of the Buddha. The bilingual texts that employ words in both Pali and Lao seem to have been used as magic spells. Manuscript BAD-13-2-007 contains a text that derives

some of its formulations from the Triple Gem, which are combined with specific Lao expressions in order to create such magic. One part of this formula reads:

ພຸດທັງອັດ ທໍາມັງອັດ ສັງຄັງອັດ ... ພຸດທັງຕູດ ທໍາມັງຕູດ ສັງຄັງຕູດ ... ພຸດທັງ ສະລະມັງອັດ  
ທໍາມັງ ສະລະມັງອັດ ສັງຄັງ ສະລະມັງອັດ ...

[May the] Buddha [help me to] close [my mind to the unmeritorious], the Dhamma [me to] close [my mind to the unmeritorious], the Sangha [me to] close [my mind to the unmeritorious] [...] [May the] Buddha [help me to] stop [my mind from the unmeritorious], the Dhamma [me to] stop [my mind from the unmeritorious], the Sangha [me to] stop [my mind to the unmeritorious] [...] [I hold the] Buddha as my refuge [to help me] close [my mind to the unmeritorious]. [I hold the] Dhamma as my refuge [to help me] close [my mind to the unmeritorious]. [I hold the] Sangha as my refuge [to help me] close [my mind to the unmeritorious] ...

The words and expressions used in this incantation reflect the scribe's high competence in the use of Pali. In short, he possessed the skills to determine the correct Lao words to combine with Pali to make the incantation. Thus, this scribe seems to have been an expert in incantations. Sadly, we have no information about the purpose of this incantation, even though it does seem we can consider it was used by monks, novices, nuns, and probably even lay people, as some sort of protection from danger.

Another Lao word often used in tandem with magic is *mon* (ມົນ); this is derived from the Pali *manta* (a divine saying; incantation). It appears that some Buddhist scholars, especially monks with a knowledge of Pali and an interest in incantations, composed *mon* for their own private use by combining words from Pali and Lao. Such texts containing magic and *mon* have been composed and handed down from one generation to the next, a practice that is still common in the present. Indeed, Phouvong (1959: 341) notes that:

The *Paritta* or *Manta* (*Mantra*) are magical formulas usually in Pali verses. They are extracts from canonical works and people recite them to protect themselves from the dangers that threaten human life: illness, wants, snake-bite, fire, and so on. The old collection has, however, been enriched by new elements of more recent composition, so these works occupy an intermediate space between the canon and post-canonical literature.

This statement indicates that magic and *mon* have been utilized by both monks and laypeople. Therefore, monks, novices and nuns experienced in using magic and *mon* receive much respect from lay Buddhists for their special skills.

#### 4. Philology

Since many Lao Buddhists believe Pali to be the language that the Buddha used to disseminate the Dhamma, failed monks and novices possess some knowledge of the language. At the very least, they should be able to read some basic manuscripts and recite Pali within everyday contexts. In other words, monks and novices of all ages, including newly-ordained ones, must be capable of reading palm-leaf manuscripts and giving blessings to the laity in Pali which is known to the Lao Buddhists as *yatha sapphi dai* (ຍະຖາສັບພີໄດ້). Any monk or novice unable to fulfil such basic requirements will most certainly have difficulty remaining in the monkhood because these are regarded as mandatory skills that are part and parcel of being a good monastic member.

As such, it is very important that monks attain this basic level of Pali, lest they lose the respect of the laity. Whenever monks are considered to have reached a new level of holiness or Dhammic ability, a *theraphisek* (ເຖລາພິເສກ) ceremony is held in their honour to commemorate such achievements (Thongkham 2003: 287–294). There is an order to these celebrations based on the level achieved: the first celebration commemorates the attainment of the position of *pha samdet* (ພະສໍາເດັດ) the second marks one's elevation to *pha sa* (ພະຊາ); whereas all of the ceremonies from the third onwards celebrate those holding the position of *pha khu* (ພະຄູ), the highest level of honour traditionally attainable for monks in Lao society.

#### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0331

This short undated palm-leaf manuscript entitled *Akkhalaviphatthipani* (“Letters and case-endings”) comprises 29 leaves, of which two of these are blank. The length of the leaves are 37.8 cm and their width equate to 5 cm. The texts were written in Tham-Lao with 5 lines on each page; the pagination follow Sanskrit orthography.

The manuscript is written in Pali predominantly relates to Pali grammar. The first part of this text begins with an introduction to the Pali alphabet (Pali *akkhara*). This is divided into two categories: vowels (Pali *sara*) and consonants (Pali *vyañjana*). The text presents a variety of nouns (Pali *nāma*) and their case-endings (Pali *vibhatti*). The last part of the text deals with verbs and their respective conjugations, that is to say, an integral part

of the *ākhayāta* of Pali grammar.<sup>95</sup> The manuscript reflects on the benefits of mastering the grammar of Pali, especially for monks in the area. In this way, the monks become cognizant of the restrictions, limitations and additional qualities of the Pali in comparison to Lao grammar. One section of text reads (in Pali) thus:

*A, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o iti ime akharā aṭṭhasarā nāma honti. Tesu pana aṭṭhasu saresu a, i, u iti ime sarā tayo lahumattā rassā nāma honti. Tesu ca aṭṭhasu saresu ā, ī, ū, e, o iti ime pañca sarā dīgha nāma honti. Tesu ekacattārisāya akkharesu k, kh, g, gh, ṅ, c, ch, j, jh, ñ, ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, t, th, d, dh, n, p, ph, b, bh, m, y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ṃ iti ime tetimsa-akkharā byañjanā nāma honti.*

Translation: *A, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o* are the so-called ‘eight vowels’. Of these eight vowels, the three vowels *a, i, u* are called one-*mattā*,<sup>96</sup> or light and short vowels. The other 5 of the 8 vowels, *ā, ī, ū, e, o* are called long vowels. Of the forty-one letters, *k, kh, g, gh, ṅ, c, ch, j, jh, ñ, ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, t, th, d, dh, n, p, ph, b, bh, m, y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ṃ* are called the ‘thirty-three consonants’.

Here, the scribe provides more details regarding the short vowels, *lahumattā rassā*, than long vowels; indicatively, he only briefly mentions the *dīgha* (long) quality. Missing from this manuscript, moreover, is the fact that two of the five long vowels, *e* and *o*, have a longer pronunciation when they occur at the end of a syllable, but these are shorter when followed by a consonant (Perniola 1997: 1). This indicates that the scribe who copied this manuscript may have had some limitations vis-à-vis the knowledge of Pali. McDaniel’s (2009: 129) investigation of Khruba Kancana from Phrae in northern Thailand, who copied a great number of manuscripts in the 1830s, offers a similar conclusion: “Krūpā Kañcana was famous for copying vernacular texts. Indeed, he may not have known Pali grammar well and there is no evidence that he ever composed a Pali text.” The scribe of manuscript BAD-13-1-0331 may have been quite experienced in copying in general but this skill, of course, does not necessarily require an in-depth knowledge of Pali. This might be why he was unaware of certain grammar points that would have normally been included, but are nevertheless missing from this text.

There is no evidence available which shows that this manuscript was used for learning Pali grammar or any other purposes such as for making merit by copying the manuscript and the promotion of the language believed to be used by the Buddha when he

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<sup>95</sup> For more details, please see Collins 2006, pp. 17–119.

<sup>96</sup> “One *mattā/mora* is the length of time it takes to pronounce a short vowel; two *mattā/mora* are required for a long vowel.” *Ibid.* p. 3.

was alive. Nonetheless, the scribe who compiled – and probably copied – this manuscript should be considered a scholar interested in Pali. This manuscript might have been used as guidance or as a textbook for the learning of Pali grammar. In brief, such a method would have been an inefficient learning technique for a variety of reasons, chiefly in terms of the omission of content and the limitations attendant on the scribe’s expertise vis-à-vis the grammar of Pali.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-063**

The text of this untitled paper manuscript pertains to philology. The manuscript comprises 88 pages, of which five are blank. The length of this manuscript is 62 cm and the width is 23 cm. The text was written in the Burmese and Tham Khün scripts with a range of 46–77 lines per page and possesses no pagination. This manuscript was written in three columns: the first column contains Burmese words and expressions in Burmese script; the second explains the pronunciation of these written phonetically in the Tham-Khün script; and the last column entails a translation in Tai Khün language. In effect, the manuscript serves as a bilingual Burmese-Khün dictionary.

This manuscript does not seem to be written as a textbook for studying Burmese, however, but rather a recorded book of various words, expressions, phrases and sentences thought to be necessary for everyday use. The information was most likely taken from other works, most probably Anglo-Burmese and Burmese-English dictionaries, including English-Thai dictionary (Grabowsky and Khamvone 2016: 247). The way in which this manuscript was constructed is remarkable insofar as that, before the beginning of the text, the compiler provides his readers with an index of the Burmese alphabet listing both vowels and consonants, which serves as a basic introduction to reading Burmese script. Three short phrases are written in the the Tham-Khün script, whereas the rest of the page contains the Burmese script. Therefore, it is very difficult, or even close to impossible, to decipher for someone who has no experience reading other variants of the Dhamma script, such as Tham-Lan Na, Tham-Lao and Tham-Lü.

As noted, this manuscript was written in three columns on each page. Burmese numerals appear in the left margin of each page as well. The numerals seem to list the words, expressions, phrases and sentences which were selected and written into this manuscript – the last numeral is 2,385 (see Figure 4.2 below). This indicates the painstaking effort made by the scribe, as he was probably of Tai Khün ethnicity, to learn the Burmese language later on in life. He tried to find words and expressions that he thought would be useful to Tai Khün people in order to understand basic Burmese. Another possibility, however, is that the manuscript was written by a Tai Khün monk

living in Chiang Tung in the Shan States of Myanmar (Peltier 1987: 1) where people comprehend both Tai Khün and Burmese. Perhaps the Tai Khün people in the region wished to have more knowledge about the Burmese language in order to engage with another part of society, and the scribe responded to this demand. Nevertheless, this manuscript later ended up in the possession of Sathu Nyai Khamchan.

Even though there is no evidence suggesting that Sathu Nyai Khamchan certified this manuscript, it nonetheless reflects the wide variety of lettering used in the manuscripts found in the abbot’s collection. Since this manuscript was written in the Tham-Khün script – that is, a variant of the Dhamma script - it is also legible to those versed in reading the Tham-Lao script. Sathu Nyai Khamchan was very knowledgeable about various dhammic scripts. Although his reason for keeping this manuscript remain unclear, it is perhaps possible that he was interested in learning Burmese and so he found this text suitable for use as a personal learning tool.

Figure 4.2: Sample of the first and the last five words of manuscript BAD-13-2-063

တွဲဝံလံဝံ	ကံအံအံ	ကံလံလံ
၁ ဘာလံ	ပါဝလံ	အံလံ? မိလံ?
၂ အဘယံ	အလံလံ	သံလံ လံလံ
၃ ဘယ်လံ	လံလံ	ယံလံ. ယံလံ
၄ ဘယ်ဘယံ	လံလံ	လံလံ. လံလံ
၅ ဘယ်လံ	လံလံ	လံလံ. လံလံ
၂၃၁၁ ကံလံ		လံလံ (လံလံ)
၂၃၁၂ သံလံ		လံလံ ( " )
၂၃၁၃ ယံလံ		လံလံ ( " )
၂၃၁၄ လံလံ		လံလံ (လံလံ)
၂၃၁၅ လံလံ		လံလံ (လံလံ)

Figure 4.2 illustrates the first five words in all three columns. All of these words in Column 3, in the form of Tai Khün translation, are very similar to Thai (Siamese) words. They are, for instance, *arai* (what), *tham mai* (why), *yang rai* (how), *müa rai* (when), *thi nai* (where). The last five words appear only in the first and final columns. The Tai Khün pronunciations here are also similar to the Thai: *rao thang lai* (all of us), *than thang lai* (all of you/everyone), *khao thang lai* (all of them), *khao sai thang lai* (all of them [masculine]), *khao ying thang lai* (all of them [feminine]). Thus, one can clearly see the relationship among the Tai Kadai languages.

Although we cannot read the last five words because they are not transcribed into Tham-Khün phonetics, we can see that each of these words has an explanation in parentheses. The explanation reads (in Tai Khün) *pen kam*, meaning: [used as] an object [of speech], teaching more about the method of applying these words – grammatically syntax highlighting – rather than their semantic meanings. The compiler of this manuscript informed his readers and users of the basic grammatical differences between Burmese and the Tai Khün. The scribe might have been knowledgeable concerning grammar or perhaps just copied from this from another text.

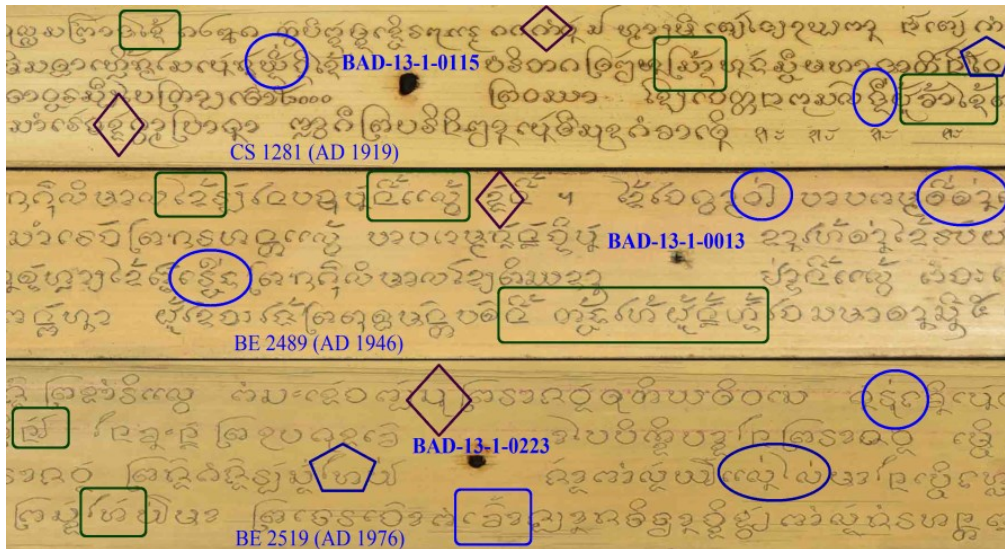
This manuscript was found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan after his death in 2007, it is reflecting his ability in reading many different scripts. Sathu Nyai Khamchan could read many Tai scripts, especially different versions of dhammic scripts used to record Pali and give these texts a more sacred aura. Some of the manuscripts found in his abode not only contain variants of the Dhamma script, but also incorporate Burmese script in Pali as well (see, for instance, BAD-13-2-019, BAD-13-2-020). This indicates that the Lao and Burmese Buddhist organizations, at least sometimes, exchanged their experiences regarding the propagation of Buddhism. The material that they most likely shared probably comprised textbooks and sacred manuscripts.

Regarding the latter, for instance, the scribe of manuscript BAD-13-2-063 may have understood that the Burmese script and language have long been associated with the teachings of the Buddha. For this reason, it is beneficial for the Tai Khün people, especially those who are Buddhists, to understand the Burmese script and language in order to communicate with Burmese Buddhists. As such, Lao monks and novices, and indeed also laypeople, may have wished to learn Burmese words and expressions to facilitate communication with Burmese people. This manuscript might not have been used specifically for religious purposes, but rather to aid with basic communication. Not only does this manuscript serve as a resource containing knowledge about the Burmese language, but it also functions as evidence verifying the similarities between the two languages, Burmese and Tai Khün; that is to say, to be precise, common languages within the Tai Kadai linguistic family.

The contributions of monks to the preservation and development of Lao philology is also in ready evidence in a variety of other manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection. It is possible to discern here that most texts, inscribed on both palm-leaf or printed on paper, contain words lacking a single standard orthography. The most remarkable of these are words with abbreviated or shortened forms. These words are known to the Lao Buddhist scholars as *kham nyò* (ຄໍາຫຍໍ້). In addition, the first and second tone marks (ຮູບວັນນະຍຸດ) were used in these manuscripts as well. With regard to the manuscripts found at Vat Saen Sukharam and the other four Vat (Khili, Pak Khan, Xiang

Muan, Xiang Thòng), it seems that the application of standard and full orthographic forms, as well as other tone marks, had been in practice within Lao manuscript culture from the 1910s CE<sup>97</sup>. This has been applied even more uniformly from the 1940s. Therefore, the decade following 1910 should be viewed as a marked turning point vis-à-vis the orthographic system of Tham-Lao applied in manuscripts by Buddhist scholars of Luang Prabang.

Figure 4.3: Sample of tone marks

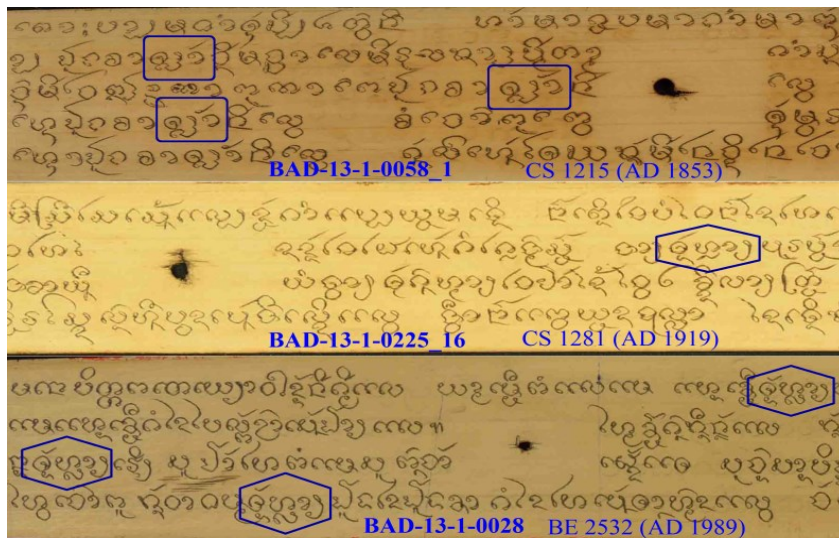


Throughout this figure, the first tone mark (ໄມ້ເອກ), in ovals, and the second tone mark (ໄມ້ໂທ), in rounded rectangles, are applied. However, many words have no tone marks, despite the requirements of the orthographic rules used here. The first tone mark should have been applied to the words in diamonds, but it does not appear in this example. Similarly, the words in pentagons should contain the second tone mark, but these are also lacking. This indicates that the scribes who wrote these manuscripts had long-term experience in writing Tham-Lao script, according to its old orthographic system or spelling, and tried to introduce the new techniques. While writing these manuscripts, however, they may have written some words following the old system. In addition, one of the shortened words, *thanglai* (all), is frequently replaced with a complete word.

<sup>97</sup> For more details, please see manuscripts BAD-13-1-0004, BAD-13-1-0007, BAD-13-1-0008, BAD-13-1-0009, BAD-13-1-0010, BAD-13-1-0011, BAD-13-1-0012, BAD-13-1-0013, BAD-13-1-0104, BAD-13-1-0108, BAD-13-1-0109, BAD-13-1-0110, BAD-13-1-0115, BAD-13-1-0128, BAD-13-1-0146, BAD-13-1-0157, BAD-13-1-0164, BAD-13-1-0186, BAD-13-1-0193, BAD-13-1-0195, BAD-13-1-0208, BAD-13-1-0222, BAD-13-1-0223, BAD-13-1-0280, BAD-13-1-0300, BAD-13-1-0302, BAD-13-1-0319.



Figure 4.4: Sample of shortened and complete words



In this figure, the shortened word, *thanglai*, appears in the four rounded rectangles and was used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0058, dated AD 1853. Upon reaching AD 1919 onwards, this word was replaced with the full word, as we can see in manuscripts BAD-13-1-0225 and BAD-13-1-0028 - all outline with a hexagon - comprising seven in total. It seems that Lao scholars living prior to the nineteenth century utilized shortened words and abbreviations in their writing, whereas some scholars in Luang Prabang from the 1920s on preferred to use full words in their literary works. Sometimes both full words and shortened words are used; this feature depends on the scribe. For examples of some of the shortened and full words, as well as their meanings, please see Table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7: Sample of shortened words

Old spelling		New spelling		Romanisation	Lao	Meaning
Shape	Number of script	Shape	Number of script			
ອິ	2	ຖຸ່ວີ	5	an va	ອັນວ່າ	-
ຜູ້	4	ຜຸ່ວີ	5	khan va	ຄັນວ່າ	if
ຜູ້/ຜູ້	4/4	ຜິວີ	4	phi va	ຜີວ່າ	if
ອຸ້	4	ອຸ້ງງ	7	thanglai	ທັງຫຼາຍ	all
ອີ	2	ເຈົາ	4	chao	ເຈົ້າ	you; owner; yes
ອັ	2	ອັດ/ອັງ	3/3	cak	ຈັກ	will, shall
ອົງ	3	ເນົາ	4	au	ເອົາ	to get, take
ເຮົາ	5	ເຮົາຮູ້	7	khao khòng	ເຂົ້າຂອງ	thing; material; property
ົ	2	ແລ	2	lae	ແລ	(final particle); and
ຣ	1	ຣາ	2	na	ນາ	(final particle); rice field
ຜົງ	4	ແລນາ/ແລນຣ	3	lae na	ແລນາ	(final particle)
ຮູ້	3	ວາວາ	4	khatha	ຄາຖາ	magic, formula
ຜູ້	4	ວະວ່າ	5	katham	ກະທຳ	to make, do
ວ່	2	ວ່	2	kò	ກໍ	(connector); also
ຮູ້	3	ວ່ຂີ່/ວ່ຂີ່	4/4	kò di	ກໍດີ	and; or; can be done
ຜູ້	4	ວ່ມາ/ວ່ມາ	4/4	kò ma	ກໍມາ	(connector)+ to come
ຜູ້	3	ວ່ມີ/ວ່ມີ	4/4	kò mi	ກໍມີ	(connector)+ to have
ຜູ້	3	ບໍ່ມີ	4	bò mi	ບໍ່ມີ	(not have)
ຮູ້/ຮູ້	3/3	ວາລະ	4	kala	ກາລະ	time, a period of time
ຮູ້	3	ດີລີ	4	khili	ຄີລີ	hill, mountain
ຮູ້	4	ດີວີ	4	khü va	ຄືວ່າ	(they are)
ສູ້	3	ດີລີ/ດີລີ/ດີລີ	4/5	di li	ດີລີ	(final particle); good
ຮູ້	4	ດີວີ	4	sü va	ຊື່ວ່າ	to name
ໄປມາ	4	ໄປມາ	4	pai ma	ໄປມາ	to go and come
ເມືອງ	4	ເມືອງ	3	sena	ເສນາ	attendant; troop, army
ຮູ້/ຮູ້	3/3	ແລດີ/ແລແລ	4/4	thae lae	ແທ້ແລ	(final particle); really; indeed
ຮູ້/ຮູ້	3/3	ຊະລີ/ຊະແລ	4/4	salae	ຊະແລ	(final particle)
າ າ າ	1/2/3	ະ	2	a	ະ	a
ງຽງ	1/1	ລີ/ລີ	2/2	lü	ລີ	how

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are a variety of scripts present in the manuscript collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. The widest variety is most in evidence in the paper manuscripts. Not only do the scripts themselves vary, but there are sometimes various orthographical standards mixed within one text. To express the feature of this type of orthographic rule, a book of Lao grammar and orthography (ໄວຍາກອນລາວ, ອັກຂະໜະວິທີ) was

published in 1935. From this time until 1975, Lao contained an additional set of letters derived from Pali and Sanskrit. This book deals with many matters concerning how to read the letters and their combinations, as well as the orthographic system in general. Specifically, fourteen new consonants are introduced in order to adhere to the orthographic standards of Pali and Sanskrit, adding to the twenty-seven consonants in Lao at that time. It seems the first tone mark, *mai ek*, and the second one, *mai tho*, were generated as well.<sup>98</sup> Ivarsson (2008: 225) notes that:

The alphabet and grammar devised by Maha Sila Viravong was not totally discarded, however, as this alphabet was allowed for use in religious texts published by the Buddhist Institute and in Pali school in Laos. This, however, did not include Luang Phrabang, where the *Tham* script was still used in religious texts. In total, three alphabets and two orthographic principles were in use in Laos in the late 1930s.

The functions of the three scripts employed, namely the Lao, Tham (Tham-Lao), and Lao-Pali scripts, are as follows. The Lao script was typically used for secular works and for official documents, while the Tham-Lao script was reserved for religious works. The Lao-Pali script was reserved for Buddhist education. While most Buddhist scholars in Luang Prabang were proud of the tradition using the Tham-Lao script to write religious texts, some scribes chose not to employ this script and Lao script; they preceded the combined Lao-Pali script.

## 5. Law

Monks, novices and nuns are responsible for following monastic rules as well as adhering to basic social principles. Indeed, they must carry out these responsibilities if they wish to be viewed as dedicated practitioners of the faith. Some manuscripts found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan detail such traditional law.

### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0304

This manuscript is undated. It comprises 23 palm leaves, measuring 57.6 cm in length and 4.7 cm in width. Its title is *Lakkhana Mao Lao* (ລັກຂະນະເມົາເຫຼົ້າ) or “Characteristics of Being Drunk”. The texts were written in the Tham-Lao script with 4 lines per page. Some

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<sup>98</sup> Buddhist Institute [Sila Vilavong, Maha] ພູດທະບັນດິຕະສະພາຈັນທະບູລີ[ມະຫາ ສິລາ ວິລະວົງ] 1935.

of the left-hand margins contain subtitles such as *Khwai ngua khao na* (ຄວາຍງົວເຂົ້ານາ), or “A Buffalo and a Cow Enter a Rice Field”, *Chon lak khwai* (ໂຈນລັກຄວາຍ) or “A Thief Steals a Buffalo”, and *Tak pha lüm ku* (ຕາກຜ້າລຶມກູ້), “To Leave the Laundry Hanging Outside”.

The contents of this manuscript deal with traditional law, which both monastics and laypeople were required to follow in order to ensure a cohesive society and community. When a quarrel between laypeople broken, monks often stepped in to mediate the dispute, especially when such matters took place within a single family. The following is an excerpt from this manuscript:

ງົວຄວາຍກິນເຂົ້າແຮກ ໃຫ້ເຈົ້າຄວາຍມີໄກ່ ໒ ຕົວ ເຫຼົ້າ ໒ ໂທ ໝາກຫົວ ເກືອຫໍ່ ທຽນ ໒ ເຫຼ້ມ ໃຫ້ແກ່ເຈົ້ານາ (໑), ຜົວບໍ່ໃຊ້ເຂົ້າແຮກ ຜິກິນເມືອຈິ່ງປູກໃຫ້ແທນ (໒), ເມື່ອກິນເມື່ອມານເຂົ້າ ຄົງ ກິນທໍ່ໃດໃຫ້ແທນທີ່ນັ້ນແລ (໓).

[If] a cow and a buffalo graze rice plants (planted in a small paddy field plot dedicated to the guardian spirit of the rice field), the owner of the cow and the buffalo must pay the owner of the rice field two chickens, two jars of liquor, one mouth of betel, one pack of salt, and two candles (1). If they are not such rice plants, [the owner of the cattle] must transplant the rice plants – replacing all eaten rice plants (2). If [the cattle] eats rice plants with ears of rice on them, the owner of the cattle must replace the eaten rice with the same amount of rice (3).

This account demonstrates that three types of rice fed to cattle were not to be replaced by other crops, lest the owner of the cattle be fined. This is likely due to the perceived spiritual significance of these rice plants. In practice, before the transplantation of rice seedlings in each year, local people regularly plant some rice plants in their field totalling about one square meter. These rice plants are believed to serve as an indicator of the annual harvest of rice. The owners believe that, should any of these special rice plants be eaten or destroyed, then their harvest will diminish in its quantity and quality.

Through the above mentioned excerpt from the manuscript, it is reasonable to say that the second and the third cases are not exceeding. In the second case, if the newly-transplanted rice plants are eaten by the cattle of another farmer, then the latter must not pay compensation (in cash), but replacement of rice plants is required according to the amount of those were eaten. This article might have been laid down because the result of newly-transplanted rice plants cannot be estimated. The third one is more regularly. Learning about rice plants with ears of rice on them, the peasants can roughly calculate

their harvest. Therefore, the third article reads (in Lao) *kin thò dai hai tharn thò nan lae*, meaning: how many [of the rice plants] were eaten, to replace the same amounts.

The third case reflects the experience of the local people when estimating the amount of the annual rice harvest. When people see that the plants bear ears of rice – in essence, either growing (*tüng* ຕື່ງ) or drooping (*lip* ລິບ) rice – they use this to estimate the results of the harvest. Therefore, this edict was laid down to determine the precise equivalent of the forthcoming harvest of the area eaten and destroyed by cattle. The owner of the cattle then takes this stipulation which is commonly known and has been consistently passed on from one generation to the next.

This seems to have been more a form of mediation rather than absolute judgement in terms of determining a winning or losing party. Quarrels were usually handled via such customary mediations rather than intense litigation. This indicates that in the ancient times the Lao people lived in mutually respectful communities; indeed, this characteristic has been preserved and practised up to the present day.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-050**

Page nine of this mulberry paper manuscript is dated Chulasakarat 1239 (AD 1877). Since some of the first and last pages – where the title usually is – are missing, we do not know whether this multiple-text manuscript has a title or not, but its text relates to traditional medicine, secular literary work, traditional law, and other miscellaneous notes. The manuscript comprises 46 pages that measure 36.3 cm in length and 12 cm in width. The text was written in the Lao Buhan, Tham-Lao and Thai scripts, with 1–13 lines per page and without pagination. A text on page 6 reads, “ສະໝຸດເຈົ້າພະຍາຫົວຂອງ ເຫຼືອງ ຈິນດາວົງ”, which means, “This manuscript belongs to Chao Phanya Hua Khòng Lüang Chindavong.”

Of the texts in this manuscript, a text concerning traditional law shall be presented here. The text entitled *Palasük 9 Tua* (ປາລາສຸັກ ໙ ຕົວ) or “nine fatal offenses”. The Lao word *Palasük* was derived from the Pali *pārājika*, which refers to a monk who has committed one of the four deadly offenses for monks - the Four *Pārājika*.<sup>99</sup> It seems to say here that anyone committing any of the nine offences listed will be sentenced to death. The *Palasük 9 Tua*, however, was probably intended for laypeople, not for monks. It can be summarized as follows:

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<sup>99</sup> For more details about the Four *Pārājika*, please see Ko Lay 1990, pp. 11–12.

1) not following a royal decree (ບໍ່ປະຕິບັດຕາມຄໍາອາດຍາ); 2) making an attempt on a king's life (ລອບປົງພະຊົນເຈົ້າຊີວິດ); 3) having sexual intercourse with a king's concubine (ເສກສົມກັບນາງເຮືອນຫຼວງ); 4) stealing a king's property (ລັກລາຊະສົມບັດ); 5) an intelligent royal councilor, who is silent at a meeting, makes public what has been discussed in the meeting afterwards (ອາມາດຜູ້ສະຫຼາດເຂົ້າປະຊຸມຢູ່ທີ່ສະໜາມບໍ່ປາກບໍ່ຈາກຫຍັງ ແຕ່ຊ້າພັດເອົາເລື່ອງປະຊຸມໄປເວົ້າທົ່ວທົບ); 6) not handing over property acquired through warfare to a king (ໄດ້ສິນເສີກມາບໍ່ຖວາຍເຈົ້າຊີວິດ); 7) deserting the general in the battlefield (ຍາມແຕກສົງຄາມ, ຫົປະແມ່ທັບ); 8) convincing and leading common people to flee their country (ຊວນເອົາໄພ່ຫົນຈາກເມືອງ); and 9) not providing the king with corvee labour (ບໍ່ໄປການອາດຍາ).

If a monk violates a Palasük offence, he automatically loses his monkhood. However, the monk who has committed such an offence will be allowed to live as a layperson as long as no official accusation is raised against him. The Palasük offences in this manuscript seem to have been put into place to ensure that subjects were loyal to their king because, in essence, a person accused of breaking these rules will be sentenced to life in prison or death. A striking issue regarding these rules are the wildly divergent social statuses of the different parties. The accuser (*phu fòng* ຜູ້ພ້ອງ) in this instance would have been a king or his representative, whereas the defendant (*phu thük fòng* ຜູ້ຖືກພ້ອງ) would have been a commoner or low-ranking official, that is, one of the king's subjects. Perhaps, more precisely, one party – the accuser – was the ruler, whereas the other party – the defendant – was the subject. This suggests that the defendant probably had little chance of himself against the accusations.

Article 8 of Palasük 9 – convincing and leading common people to flee their country – seems to pertain to both monastic members and laypeople. The person who compiled these rules might have learned about the situation in Vientiane between the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. At that time, as presented in Chapter 2, a senior monk, namely Pha Khu Phonsamek, led 3000 people out of Vientiane to move southwards in search of a suitable location for a new settlement. In order to keep the kingdom strong in terms of its population, the king of Luang Prabang and his high-ranking officials had to issues strict rules in order to keep people from leaving in search of a better way to make a living. Evans (2002: 18) notes that:

But perhaps the most powerful symbol of his kingship was the That Luang, the massive stupa he ordered built in Vientiane as the symbolic centre of his kingdom. The more populous plains of Vientiane and the northern Korat

Plateau made available the labour and wealth required for this spurt in Buddhist monument building, which established Lan Xang as a truly grand Tai kingdom.

This statement demonstrates that manpower was very important in ensuring the strength of the Tai Kingdom. One of the many reasons that motivated King Sayasettha's relocation of the capital of the Lan Xang kingdom to Vientiane in 1560 was that he learnt about the fertile soil in Vientiane region available for producing crops. As such, the region could sustain a much greater population.

The last article of Palasük 9 – not going to work for a king – seems to have pertained to all common people and reflected the situation of a kingdom under the administration of a king whose reign gave birth to this rule. Under such a system, common people might have been recruited as levy workers. This is supported by a Lao proverb, which says *kan thük hua hüan* (ການຖືກຫົວເຮືອນ), meaning a work falling on one's house. It can be understood that at least one person of a family was required to work for the ruler at any given time. If the period of labour overlapped with the time during which the transplantation of rice plants occurred, then the family would have no manpower to plough and harrow the soil. This meant that the family was unable to finish this task in time, which, in turn, may leave the rice plants insufficient time to grow and bear large heads of drooping rice. In essence, the family would produce less rice that season.

Palasük 9 might also relate to a situation which took place during the reign of King Oun Kham (r.1871–1889) of Luang Prabang when the kingdom was a vassal of Siam. Luang Prabang experienced a tumultuous time under his reign because it was attacked by the Chin Haw or *hò* (ຫໍ້). The king might not have had enough power to control his kingdom, so he abandoned his throne and hid in the Pak Lai district of modern Xaignabouli (Sayaburi). The Siamese king learnt about this and sent his troops to assist the troops of Luang Prabang to drive out the *hò*. Thereafter, the Siamese government forced King Oun Kham to abdicate and appointed his eldest son, Chao Kham Suk, or King Sakkarin, as king of Luang Prabang (Maha Sila Viravong 1964: 142; 2001: 139). The Palasük 9 seems to be written during the time the kingdom was at war when strict legislation was required to maintain order within the kingdom. If this was indeed the case, it would clearly indicate that Palasük 9 was used to punish any person who tried to avoid conscription.

There were two sets of Palasük, one for the monastic community comprising four articles, and one for laypeople consisting of nine articles. Traditionally, Palasük was used to define a monk who had committed one of four deadly wrongdoings. However, Palasük also became the title of the nine-capital faults for the laypeople of Luang Prabang at the time their kingdom was at war. One possibility is that the Buddhist community of Luang

Prabang needed a moral ruler or a Buddhist-devotee king. The king and his high-ranking officials might have learned about this and applied Buddhist words and expressions in drafting such regulations during this time of war.

## 6. Literary works

With regard to literary works in Laos between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, Phouvong (1959: 343) observes that:

The accounts we have of the novels are derived from the Buddhist Texts. At first they were written in *Tham* characters and in prose, for religious instruction. Judging by the shape of the writing – unless the copies have been made according to modern hand, without taking the characters of the original text into account – we are justified in asserting that those manuscripts of novels that are in Laotian characters are not earlier than the nineteenth century, whereas the poem of the popular tales seem to date back to before the fourteenth century.

This suggests that Lao literary works may have been influenced by Buddhist teachings meaning that the border between secular and Buddhist literatures is difficult to define. Most compilers during this time, moreover, were educated Buddhists and, indeed, often senior monks.

### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0002

This manuscript is dated Chulasakarat 1286 (AD 1924), entitled *Samat Kinnari* (ສະໝາດກິນນະລີ) or “the story of [*nang*] *kinnari*”. It comprises 15 palm leaves that measure 59 cm in length and 4.7 cm in width. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines per page. Sanskrit orthography was applied to the leaves for pagination. The handwriting in the main texts is different from that in the colophon.

The abstract of the story is as follows: Phommthat, a king of Palanasi, loved to hunt wild animals. One day he went into a deep jungle to hunt alone. He saw Nang Kinnari and her husband and fell in love with the woman immediately. He was very eager to make her his wife, so he shot her husband dead. He then made Nang Kinnari an offer to marry, which she refused, saying to the king that she would hold her breath and die together with her deceased husband before she would become his wife.

Although it contains no Buddhist teachings, the story seems to have been written by applying the five basic precepts of Buddhism: to refrain from destroying living creatures;



from taking what is not given; from sexual misconduct; from incorrect speech; and from taking intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. The king violated the first two precepts by killing Nang Kinnari's husband and is about to break the third by attempting to force her to marry him. He might not be recognized – by Buddhists – as a good king because he lost social morality. In other words, kings who observe Buddhist precepts gain must respect from their subjects, so that the kings strongly foster Buddhism. During the Kingdom of Lan Xang, many kings were recognized as Buddhist kings. As Evans (2002: 15) notes: “The reigns of the Kings Visun (1501–20), Phothisarath (1520–47) and Sethathirath (1548–71), while together constituting a glorious period for Lan Xang, did not initiate any fundamental structural changes to the kingdom. Their reigns saw the increasing elaboration of regalia of Buddhist kingship; Visun is best remembered for installing the Phra Bang as the palladium (protector) of the Lan Xang kings.”

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0193**

This manuscript is dated Buddhist Era 2486 (AD 1943) and entitled *Phommathat Thòt Chit* (ພົມມະທັດຖອດຈິດ); this means “Phommathat takes out his mind”. It comprises 15 palm leaves which measure 56.8 cm in length and 4.2 cm in width, of which one is blank. The text was written in the Tham-Lao script with four lines per page. Both the text and colophon were written according to the modern Lao orthography. Sanskrit orthography was applied for the pagination of the leaves.

First, a short summary of the story: King Phommathat, accompanied by a single attendant whose name was Chitta Sena, left his wife and palace to learn about practices of enchantment. The king learnt the spell to remove one's mind (*mon thòt chit* ມົນຖອດຈິດ) with an ascetic, and taught his attendant such a spell afterwards. On the way back to their home town they saw the remains of a deer (*sak kwang* ຊາກກວາງ). Chitta Sena tried out the spell and was successful, displacing his mind into the body of the deer. Chitta Sena devised a plan to put his newly learned ability into action. Later down the road, they saw the remains of a hog deer (*sak thwai* ຊາກທວາຍ) on which Chitta Sena convinced the king to try out the magic himself. Once the king had removed his mind and inserted it into the remains of the hog deer, Chitta Sena also took out his mind and inserted it into the mindless body of the king. Chitta Sena became the king, returned home and took the position of the ruler of his town, whereas the real king became a hog deer and wandered in the jungle. Much later, the hog deer saw the remains of a parrot (*sak nok kaeo* ຊາກນົກແກ້ວ), whereupon he took out his mind and inserted it into the remains of the parrot, so that he could fly home. Together with his wife and one high-ranking official, namely Phuttha Sena, a ceremony of trying out the spell of taking out one's mind was arranged and organized. At the ceremony, seeing Chitta Sena, who was the king at the time, removed his mind from the mindless body of

the real king and inserted it into the remains of a hog deer, the real king, who was the parrot at the time, also took out his spirit from the body of the parrot and inserted it into his mindless body, once again becoming the real king. The hog deer, which was then cursed and whipped by the audience, ran away in fear and shame.

While this story is indeed full of supernatural occurrences, it nevertheless reflects the Buddhist belief in the concept of Kamma. Lao Buddhists believe that human beings will reap what they have sown. Therefore, what they gain in the present is also the result of what they have already done in the past; likewise, they will experience the effects of their present actions later on. Chitta Sena harmed another to become king, so his kingship was very short; in essence, he experienced the effects of that which he had done in the same life. This is also supported by Lao proverbs, “*yak kha phoen to tai* ຢາກຂ້າເພິ່ນໂຕຕາຍ” meaning “want to kill them [but] die oneself”; and “*phai tham kam an dai vai kam nan nyòm tòp sa-nòng* ໃຜທຳກຳອັນໃດໄວ້ ກຳນັ້ນຍ່ອມຕອບສະໜອງ”, or “the result of actions will return to those who did them.”

The people who compiled this story, most likely including scribe(s), might have been very knowledgeable about the Buddha’s teachings. He did not insert the content of the teachings into the story, but, at the same time, he did not forget to note at the beginning that the father of King Phommthat gained his royal properties because of his good-deeds in his former lives. This demonstrates that the compiler tried to make the story suitable for preaching. Moreover, he started this work by utilizing certain Pali words, thus seeming to act as an introduction to the story. In fact, readers and audiences may or may not understand the Pali words, but such words are required whenever anyone needs to make a performance more ritualistic. It is possible that the compiler of this story used Pali words in this work – not only at the beginning of the story, but also in the story – to serve the same purpose.

## 7. Custom and Ritual

Lao people organize a festival every month known as *hit sip-sòng* (ຮີດສິບສອງ)<sup>100</sup> or the “twelve customs”. Additionally, certain ritual ceremonies must be organized during one’s lifetime such as celebrations for one’s birth, wedding and funeral. Swearer (1981: 23) explains meanings of these rites in Theravada Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia thus: “These rites have meanings on various levels: to ensure safe passage through a transition to another stage of life; to integrate the life circle of the individual into the ongoing life-

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<sup>100</sup> For more details about *hit sip-sòng*, please see Thòngkham 2546 (2003), pp. 174–184; Khamphun 2011, pp. 107–109.

pattern of the community; to place the individual within a cosmological structure governed by various unseen and relatively unpredictable powers (e.g., *kamma*, *cao*, *phī*, *nat*).” This indicates that one’s lifetime is associated with Buddhist, animist, and other kinds of beliefs. Therefore, it is not surprising that some manuscripts concerning this matter – such as manuscripts to remove bad luck (*kae khò / sia khò* ແກ້ເຄາະ/ເສຍເຄາະ), or to prolong the lifetime of a person or object (*süp sata* ສືບຊາຕາ) – were found in *hò tai* (monastic libraries) and in the abodes of senior monks.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-1-0079**

This manuscript comprises 9 palm leaves, measuring 28.5 cm in length and 5 cm in width. It bears two texts. The first text is entitled *Süp Sata Hüan Hai-Na* (ສືບຊາຕາເຮືອນໄຮ່ນາ), which means to prolong the lifetime of a house and rice-field. This is one of the ritual ceremonies organized for the longevity of something, including human beings (ບຸນສືບຊາຕາ). The second one is entitled *Kae Kam-loet Hüan* (ແກ້ກຳເລີດເຮືອນ), which means to remove bad luck from a house. The texts were written with 5 lines per page and numbers were applied for its pagination.

Apart from an introduction and explanation vis-à-vis collecting particular offerings and organizing the ceremony, the first text was written in Pali, whereas the second one occasionally includes words inserted in Lao and Pali. It seems that it was used in a ceremony to welcome good luck and auspicious moments. Therefore, Pali, which is believed to be the language used by the Buddha, is required. Furthermore, the text is meant to be read as a sermon to the person for whom the ceremony is held and the audience can also gain merit from this performance. This is a popular belief among Lao Buddhists, who are eager to achieve merit and are less interested in the actual meaning of the text.

The second text deals with the removal of bad luck so it involves supernatural powers. The question may thus be raised: why and how would a house possess bad luck? Some Lao people traditionally believe that everything in nature – such as land, rivers, trees and mountains – is possessed by a *chao* (ເຈົ້າ) or guardian spirit. This means a person who wants to build his/her house on a piece of land has to perform a ritual ceremony to ask for permission from the spirit of the land; anyone about to travel by boat has to perform a ceremony to ask for protection from the spirit of the river; and anyone driving along a road thought to be possessed by spirits should stop his/her vehicle for a few minutes to perform a ceremony to ask for permission from the spirits to pass through their realm and ask for protection. When building a house, the house owner must perform a ceremony to move Nang Thòlani (ນາງທໍລະນີ), or the guardian spirit of the land, to move from the place where

the house is to be built, yet reside close to the site in order to guard it (Thòngkham 2003: 525–526).

When a house is completely finished, its owner also organizes another ritual ceremony to celebrate the new house and mark the change of residence. From that point on, unexpected occurrences – such as any resident becoming seriously ill or suffering an accident, property theft, and so forth – may take place many times. Such incidents are believed to be the consequences of a certain taboo (*naeo bò di* ແນວບໍ່ດີ), for example, being buried under the ground where the house is located. In such cases, a ceremony for removing bad luck from the house is required. The incidents may also be the consequences of the bad luck of any resident, which are supposed to be caused by the mother of that resident in a former life (*mae kao mae lang* ແມ່ເກົ່າແມ່ຫຼັງ). Therefore, a ritual ceremony for removing bad luck from the resident of the house is required (ibid. p. 311). In practice, Lao people organize ritual ceremonies to fulfil multiple purposes. On the occasion of organizing a ceremony to remove bad luck from a house and a person, good luck for the house and its owner is also expected.

The second text was composed with words in Pali and Lao. An excerpt of this text reads, “*om buddho* ເປັນກ້ອນເຫຼັກແດງ, *om dhammo* ເປັນແສງຫອກດາບ, *om saṅgho* ເປັນໜ້າໄມ້ປືນຍໍ່າ”, meaning “Om<sup>101</sup>! Buddhho, a hot bar iron, Om! Dhammo, a spear and a sword, Om! Saṅgho, a sacred crossbow.” This clearly demonstrates that the person who composed this text knew the Triple Gem of Buddhism well or, at least, knew the meaning of the Triple Gem. He selected Pali words, thus related to Buddhism, and combined these with Lao to create magic (previously discussed above.) He also knew a number of words denoting various types of weapons used at the time. In effect, he composed this text based on his belief in the power of sacredness of the Three Gems combined with the names of various weapons. By doing so, he might have expected that this text could be used to protect people from harm and to remove bad luck from all living beings and other objects.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-021**

This paper manuscript is untitled and undated. Its texts relate to matters such as the removal of bad luck and the calculation of auspicious moments, as well as omens and magic. The manuscript comprises 82 pages, 11 pages of which are blank. The length of this

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<sup>101</sup> “Om” is a short form of a compound word by three words in Sanskrit, *a u ma* (ॐ, ॐ, ॐ). The three words were first used in Hinduism representing the Three Gods: Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahm, respectively. Much later, Buddhist scholars adopted these words to represent the Three Gems: Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. The compound form of these words – Om – is used to begin both prayers and incantations. For more details, see Siviengkhek 2010: 1392–1393; Sila 2001: 371; Preecha 1989: 1002.

manuscript is 40 cm and the width is 38.5 cm The text was written in the Tham-Lao, Tham-Lü and Lao Buhan scripts, with 2–20 lines per page and no pagination.

Although the manuscript is untitled, some titles do appear on various pages such as *Suai thevada* (ຊວາຍເທວະດາ) – “Offerings for Goddess Worship”, *Intha uppabat* (ອິນທະ ອຸບປະບາດ) – “Omens of Indra”, *In thang paet* (ອິນທັງແປດ) – “Guardian Gods in Eight Directions”, and *Hiak khuan khao ma nyia* (ຮຽກຂວັນເຂົ້າມາເຍຍ) – and “Calling the Spirit of Rice into the Paddy Granary”. Only the first text of this multi-text manuscript will be presented here.

*Suai thevada* discusses paying reverence and homage to two brother-hermits (ລັດສີສອງພີ່ນ້ອງ) who were supposed to find a suitable location for the establishment of a *müang* (principality). They decided to stop and settle in the location of present-day Luang Prabang. They made a post and left a note on it to mark that this location was appropriate for settlement; thus, anyone arriving at this place should establish *müang* (polity) on this land, and by doing so, the *müang* would surely be glorious in the future. An excerpt from *Suai thevada* reads:

ທີ່ນີ້ຈັກກ່າວບູຊາເຈົ້າລັດສີ ໒ ພີ່ນ້ອງກ່ອນແລ. ຜິວ່າເປັນເຫດເຂັນບັງເກີດໂພຍໄພອິນຕາຍຫາກເກີດມີກັບບ້ານກັບເມືອງ ຝົນບໍ່ຕົກແຫ້ງໃຂ່ ບັງເກີດພະຍາດອາພາດກັບບ້ານກັບເມືອງຕັ້ງນັ້ນ; ບັງເກີດຂ້າລັກຂະໂມຍໂຈນ ມານຂ້າເສິກສັດຕູຈັກເຂົ້າປະຈິນບັງບຽດຕັ້ງນັ້ນ; ຈິ່ງໃຫ້ບູຊາເຈົ້າລັດສີສອງພີ່ນ້ອງ.

Now I shall discuss paying reverence and homage to the two brother hermits. If undesirable circumstances happen to a village or town such as widespread disease, drought, robbery, assault, or potential enemy attack, then reverence and homage should be paid to the two brother hermits.

In this part of *Suai thevada*, the two brother hermits might have left further advice concerning the behaviour of the people in the town and tried to establish a way of resolving displeasing occurrences. The four undesirable happenings affect all people of the village, so it is thought to be beneficial for everyone to contribute to the organization of such a ceremony. This reverence for the hermits was reasonable because the town was established according to their advice. This rite might first have been organized after the incidents took place; in other words, the people of the town organized ritual ceremonies to remove the bad luck from their town.

It seems that people organized this ceremony for the protection of their town from terrible occurrences in the future. The ceremony organized for this purpose became a required ritual practiced in the first lunar month (Thongkham, 2003: 175). The first two circumstances mentioned in manuscript BAD-13-2-021 seem to have taken place

seasonally and annually. Not only were all of occurrences mentioned in the text undesirable for people, but these also made people frightened. As such, people may have organized such ritual ceremonies in advance to obstruct such occurrences. This is also supported by Lao proverbs, one of which stipulates *kan di kua kae* (ກັນດີກວ່າແກ້), or “prevention is better than repair”.

### Manuscript BAD-13-2-015

This paper manuscript is entitled Kan Saban (ກ້ານສາບານ), which means, “a sworn statement”. The manuscript is dated Chulasakarat 1245 (AD 1883) and comprises 26 pages, 4 of which are blank. The length of this manuscript is 35 cm and the width is 11.8 cm. The text was written in the Tham-Lao and Lao Buan scripts, with 2–7 lines per page and no pagination.

According to tradition, anyone providing testimony had to take an oath to swear the truthfulness of their statement. If they refused to do so, their testimony would then be considered invalid and the provider convicted of perjury. The sworn statement frequently called on the power of the Triple Gem or some other aspect of ancient belief to bind the oath. The following is an excerpt from such a statement.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ (ຄົນນັ້ນ) ຂໍກະທຳສັດຕະຍາທິຖານ ສາບິດສາບານຕົວຈຳເພາະຕໍ່ພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ, ພະທຳມະເຈົ້າ, ພະສັງຄະເຈົ້າ ອີກ[ທັງ]ເທບພະຍຸດາເຈົ້າອັນຮັກສາພະສາສະໜາ ທັງອາກາສະ ເທວະດາ ແລະລູກຂະເທວະດາ ແລະບັບພະຕາເທວະດາ ແລະພູມມະເທວະດາ ກັບທັງພະ ເສື້ອເມືອງ ພະຊົງເມືອງອັນເຮືອງລິດ. ... ຖ້າຂ້າພະເຈົ້າເບີກຄວາມບໍ່ຊື່ສັດສຸດຈະຫຼືດ ຂໍເຊີນ ເທບພະຍຸດາເຈົ້າທັງຫຼາຍ ຈົ່ງມາບັນດານກັນລາອຸບັດທະວະການ ສັງຫານຜານຊີວິດແຫ່ງ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ. ຖ້າຂ້າພະເຈົ້າກ່າວຄວາມຊື່ສັດສຸດຈະຫຼືດແລ້ວ ຂໍເຊີນເທບພະຍຸດາເຈົ້າທັງປວງ ຈົ່ງ[ມາ]ຊ່ວຍອະພິບານຮັກສາຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ໃຫ້ສະຖິດສະຖາພອນ. [ຂໍ]ຈົ່ງໃຫ້[ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ]ພົ້ນ ຈາກສັງສາລະທຸກ ດ້ວຍຄວາມຊື່ສັດສຸດຈະຫຼືດແຫ່ງຂ້າພະເຈົ້ານີ້ເທົ່ານັ້ນ.

I, (the person giving evidence), swear by the Triple Gem, a guardian God of religion, air, tree, mountain, and of location, including a powerful guardian spirit of the city. ... that if I give false evidence, I invite all gods to afflict my life with grave events. If I say the truth I, I call on all gods to support me and help me to endure. May my honesty free me from the cycle of suffering through re-birth.

This statement reflects belief in spirits (animism), as well as beliefs in Hinduism and Buddhism, that influenced all socio-cultural sectors, including that of justice. One striking point that shall be presented here relates to when a person gives evidence or witness and

must thereby swear by religious injunctions. He/she may or may not be involved with a court case but he/she invites the Triple Gem, Gods and spirits as witnesses to ensure that other people, including judges, have confidence in him/her. Such a person linked the court case to traditional belief, which other people were unable to prove whether what the person was saying was true or false. Thus, punishment was not to be enforced by the law, but by Gods' creation. This clearly indicates that the sworn statement was based on the social values of the time, not laws.

In the case that a person who gave evidence was not an eyewitness, but a defendant was accused of having committed a crime, such a sworn statement was unfair for the defendant because it contained nothing about the defendant's reimbursement for his/her suffering from an incrimination. In other words, the defendant asked nothing from the opposing party, but rather only requested that the gods help them endure hardship and wishing themselves free from suffering. This also indicates that there had been an effort of the one who compiled the sworn statement in explaining that the defendant got a result of his/her Kamma, or bad deeds that he/she had done in former life.

The process of adjudicating such a decision should also be discussed. The title of this text serves as both the name of the text and advice, which reads *kan saban hai an kan ni, kan ün bò ao* (ການສາບານໃຫ້ອ່ານກ້ານນີ້ ກ້ານອື່ນບໍ່ເອົາ); this translates as, "this sworn statement is the one to be read aloud, the others are not." This suggests that there were many kinds of sworn statements, including those read aloud such as a sworn statement for judges. They also had swear that they decided a case based on the law, or at the very least according to unbiased reasoning. There is no evidence, however, which verifies whether or not a sworn statement was required from judges before announcing their verdict.

### **Manuscript BAD-13-2-069**

This paper manuscript is untitled, but deals with many matters concerning customs and rituals. This includes aspects including offerings for goddesses, auspicious and inauspicious moments, and chants. Some notes on the twelve-month customs and people's birthdays were left in this manuscript as well. The manuscript comprises 62 pages with one blank page. The length of this manuscript is 34.5 cm and the width is 13.6 cm. The text was written in the Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan scripts, with 8–10 lines per page and no pagination.

Only the notes on the twelve-month customs and information concerning people's birthdays from this manuscript shall be presented. The following list shows the festivals and ceremonies carried out for each month, although the person who made the manuscript

did not provide any additional information on these festivals. such as how they were organized and for what purpose.

Table 4.8: Summary of the twelve customs (BAD-13-2-069)

Lunar month	Name	Meaning and explanation
1	Khao Kam (ເຂົ້າກຳ)	A monk who has been seriously committed offence goes through penalty and reinstatement process.
2	Ha Fün (ຫາຟືນ)	Collect firewood
3	Khao Chi (ເຂົ້າຈີ່)	Salted and roasted patties of steamed glutinous rice
4	Ha Dòk Mai (ຫາດອກໄມ້)	Collect flowers
5	Song Pha Chao (ສົງພະເຈົ້າ)	Bathe Buddha statues
6	Nam Nam (ນຳນ້ຳ)	A celebration ceremony for Buddha images.
7	Khao Kam (ບູຊາເທວະດາ)	Sacrifice offerings for a goddess
8	Khao Vatsa (ເຂົ້າວັດສາ)	Buddhist Lent
9	Khao Padap Din (ເຂົ້າປະດັບດິນ)	Food offerings left on ground or hanging from trees for spirits of relatives suffering in hell on the 14 <sup>th</sup> waning day of the ninth lunar month.
10	Khao Sak (ເຂົ້າສະຫຼາກ)	Rice offered to monks chosen by lots on the 15 <sup>th</sup> waxing day of the tenth lunar month.
11	Pavòlana (ປະວິລະນາ)	Allowed [to criticize each other, which monks perform on the last day of Buddhist Lent.]
12	Suang Hüa [and] Hae That (ຊວງເຮືອ ແຫ່ງທາດ)	Boat race and stupa celebration.

The names of the festivals and ceremonies of the twelve customs organized each month appear both the works of Thòngkham (2003: 175–252) and Khamphun’s (2011: 107–109). There are few differences between the two sources. In contrast, the names of the festivals and ceremonies listed for the second and the twelfth month in manuscript BAD-13-2-069 are different. To begin, the word *ha fün* (collect firefood) mentioned in this manuscript is more an activity rather than a festival or a ceremony. Thòngkham and Khamphun recognize Khun Khao (ຄູນເຂົ້າ), a blessing ceremony for rice, as a rite to be celebrated in the second lunar month. A person who wrote the name of festivals and ceremonies in the manuscript might have been stressing the organization of a festival celebrated in the following month, the Khao Chi festival.

A festival to be celebrated in the twelfth month, mentioned in this manuscript, is *suang hüa* [and] *hae that*, whereas the ones appearing in the works of Thòngkham and Khamphun is *bun kathin* (a festival for giving robes to monks) and *bun that* (a festival for celebrating stupa). The scribe of this manuscript may have given priority to these



traditional festivals more than to the Buddhist ones stressed by Thongkham and Khamphun. The *suang hūa* (boat race) is more popular to Lao people because it is usually organized at a certain time every year. *Bun kathin*, on the other hand, can only take place if there is a donor or sponsor to organize such a festival. In practice, the number of people participating and watching the boat race is greater than that of people participating in the procession of *kathin*.

Today, in Luang Prabang, boat races are organized at the end of the ninth lunar month following *khao padap din*.<sup>102</sup> However, the boat races mentioned in manuscript no. BAD-13-2-069 appear in the twelfth lunar month. There is no concrete evidence verifying if or why the time for this festival changed. Perhaps it was due to natural reasons, for instance, due to varying river heights. The boat races in Luang Prabang are usually held in the Nam Khan River, a tributary of the Mekong. The river may have been low during the twelfth lunar month in some years because it is no longer the rainy season, whereas the river is still high during the ninth lunar month, making it more suitable for competition.

This manuscript also contains information about the birthdays of eight people. The Four Buddhist Blessings, in Pali – *āyu* (longevity), *vaṇṇa* (beauty), *sukha* (happiness), *bala* (strength) – appear after each person's birthday introduction as follows:

ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໗໗ ຕົວ ປີຮັບເປົ້າ ເດືອນ ໑໒ ແຮມ ໒ ຄໍ່າ ວັນ ໒ ມື້ກິດຍີ່ ຍາມກອງທ່ຽງຄືນ ລູກມື້ອີ່  
ແກ່ນຈັນ ອາຍຸ ວັນໂນ ສຸຂັງ ພະລັງ. ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໗໑ ຕົວ ປີກັດເຮົ້າ ເດືອນ ໗ ແຮມ ໑໒ ຄໍ່າ ວັນ ໓  
ມື້[...]ສະຈ້າ ຍາມກອງງາຍ ລູກມື້ບາຫຸມແພງ ອາຍຸ ວັນໂນ ສຸຂັງ ພະລັງ.

Chulasakarat 1287, a *hap pao* year, in the twelfth lunar month on the second day of the waning moon, the second day of the week (corresponding to AD 2 November 1925, a Monday) a *kot nyi* day, midnight is the *luk mü* (birthday) of I Kaenchan. [May you prosper with the four blessings of] longevity, beauty, happiness, and strength. Chulasakarat 1271, a *kat hao* year, in the seventh lunar month on the twelfth day of the waning moon, the third day of the week (corresponding to AD 15 June 1909, a Tuesday) a [...] *sanga* day, midnight is the *luk mü* (birthday) of Ba Humphaeng. [May you prosper with the four blessings of] longevity, beauty, happiness and strength.

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<sup>102</sup> The festival of *khao padap din* is celebrated at the end of the ninth lunar month in the middle of Buddhist Lent. Buddhists prepare offerings mainly composed of various food and fruits. The food and fruits are usually enclosed in pieces of banana leaf (ໃບຕອງ *bai tòng*) and given to monks, placed on monastery walls and private belief grounds, and hung from trees. For more details, see Thongkham 2003: 233–235; Khamphun 2009: 88–89.

In ancient times, “*i*” (ခိ) was used as a prefix for the name of a woman and “*ba*” (ဗာ) for a man. Both *i* and *ba* could only be used before the names of young people and very close friends. Today, *i* has been replaced with *nang* (၁၅၅), and *ba* has been changed to *thao* (တိာၵ). However, both *i* and *ba* are informal use (mostly used in spoken language or daily communication between very close friends), whereas Nang and Thao are formal use (mostly reserved for written language and official documents).

A person who recorded the information regarding people’s birthdays in this manuscript might have possessed knowledge about the Four Buddhist Blessings; otherwise he would not have been able to leave such blessings after obtaining information about each person. Doing so, he might have thought that the Blessings would protect these people from harm as well. In addition, the way he recorded this matter utilized the same system of dating employed in manuscript making as demonstrated in the table below:

Table 4.9: Records of people’s birthdays (BAD-13-2-069)

Chunla sangkat	Year (Cyclic Year)	Month	Waxing	Waning	Day 1	Day 2 (Cyclic Day)	Time	People’s names
1287	<i>hap pao</i>	12		2	2	-	<i>thiang khün</i>	I Kaenchan (AD 1925, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> of November, Monday; midnight)
1287	<i>hap pao</i>	3	9		6	<i>huang khai</i>	<i>kòng khua</i>	Ba Som[...] (AD 1926, the 22 <sup>nd</sup> of January, Friday; between 1:30 and 3:00 am)
1268	<i>hwai sanga</i>	5	15		<i>pahat</i>	<i>hwai chai</i>	<i>kòng laeng</i>	I Chanpheng (AD 1907, the 28 <sup>th</sup> of March, Thursday; between 1:30 and 3:00 pm)
1271	<i>kat hao</i>	7		12	3	[...] <i>sanga</i>	<i>kòng ngai</i>	Ba Humphaeng (AD 1909, the 15 <sup>th</sup> of June, Tuesday; between 7:30 and 9:00 am)
1275	<i>ka pao</i>	5	11		5	<i>tao si</i>	<i>kòng[...]</i>	Ba Thòngdi (AD 1913, the 17 <sup>nd</sup> of April, Thursday; between [...] and [...])
1278	<i>hwai si</i>	1		14	3	<i>kat mot</i>	<i>tut sai-kòng laeng</i>	I Bunthan (There might be some mistakes, it cannot be converted into Gregorian Date)
1281	<i>kat mot</i>	8	4		3	<i>kap nyi</i>	<i>thae kai kham</i>	I Duang (AD 1919, the 1 <sup>st</sup> of July, Tuesday; between 3:00 and 4:30 pm)
1284	<i>tao set</i>	7	8		6	<i>huang pao</i>	<i>kòng doek</i>	I Vaen (AD 1922, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> of June, Friday; between 7:30 and 9:00 pm)

Table 4.9 shows that the person who recorded the people’s birthday did not follow a chronological system. Kaenchan and Som, for example, were born in the same Chulasakararat 1287, but Kaenchan was born in the twelfth lunar month, while Som was born in the third lunar month. This may indicate that the writer of this record gave priority

to the family relationship (kinship) between himself and those whose personal data he recorded. The data seems to have been recorded at one time; in other words, all of the people whose personal data was recorded might have been the writer's relatives and a person who was listed before the other people at that time might be his closest relative or his own offspring.

The table also shows that all days of the week are specified in numbers, such as Day 1 (*van nüng*: the first day of the week = Sunday), Day 2 (*van sòng*: the second day of the week = Monday), and Day 3 (*van sam*: the third day of the week = Tuesday), instead of using the names of the days; except for the day on which Chanpheng was born, which was recorded as *pahat* (Thursday), not as Day 5 (*van ha*: the fifth day of the week). Thòngdi was also born on a Thursday, but this was recorded as Day 5 (*van ha*). This implies that all the information regarding birthdays recorded in this manuscript might have been copied by another master who had been taught, or was of the view, that this data was important.

## 8. Conclusion

The manuscripts BAD-13-1-0058 and BAD-13-1-0188 found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode are just two examples of those containing information concerning historical events. According to its main text, the former falls under the classification of custom/ritual, but a short account left after the concluding remark of the last fascicle details the situation in Luang Prabang in 1854, during which people were recruited to support the war in Chiang Tung. The scribe might wanted to document that Luang Prabang was at war while he copied this manuscript Luang Prabang. The latter is an untitled manuscript comprising only one folio: its text tells of king Anurut built a stupa at the top of Phu Si Mountain. The compiler of this manuscript records an account about the Phu Si Stupa, an account that he might have learnt from manuscripts or other kinds of sources.

The majority of paper manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode contain texts related to astrological topics. One of them entitled *Nangsü ha mü hai mü di*, which calculates auspicious and inauspicious days, contains various texts and most of these texts have headings written in the left-hand margins. Some texts reflect experience in observing natural phenomena, such as days for planting (*mü puk ton mai* ມື້ປູກຕົ້ນໄມ້) and the first annual thunder (*fa hòng pi mai* ພ້າຮ້ອງປີໃໝ່). People might have observed that a certain plant cultivated on different days rendered specific result and that direction from which the first thunder emanated at the beginning of a year engendered certain phenomena.

A number of current Lao Buddhist Sangha members are very experienced in employing various types of Lao traditional medicines. Traditionally, however, the medicines were commonly used in conjunction with magical spells. This might be the

reason why some people think that it is acceptable for magical spells to be performed by monastic members. Such magic spells are used to protect people from harm. The note left in paper manuscript BAD-13-2-005 instructs the reader that a practitioner of traditional medicine must offer a variety of objects to perform a ceremony in order to pay respect to his teacher. One of these required objects is a candle with the length surrounding his head (*thian vian hua* ທຽນວຽນຫົວ). This might indicate that the relationship between learner and teacher is formalized.

Only two manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode, BAD-13-1-0331 and BAD-13-2-063, contain texts related to philology. The contents of the former deals with Pali grammar and the latter pertains to a glossary. Furthermore, numerous palm-leaf and paper manuscripts kept in the same place reflect the contributions of monks to the preservation and development of Lao philology. Texts written in these manuscripts contain numerous words transcribed in full orthographic versions which replace abbreviated or shortened forms (*kham nyò*). The first and second tone marks (*mai ek* and *mai tho*) are applied in writing as well. This matter has been practiced within Lao manuscript culture since the second decade of the twentieth century.

Manuscript BAD-13-2-050 contains numerous texts, and one of the texts is related to traditional law. The text entitled *Palasük kao tua* (ປາລາຊິກ ນ ຕົວ) or “nine fatal offenses”. The Lao word *Palasük* word originating from the Pali *pārājika* that refers to a monk who has committed one of the four deadly offences for monks, the Four Pārājika. However, nothing in the manuscript *Palasük kao tua* directly relates with the activities of monks; rather it seems to have been written to ensure the loyalty of subjects to their king. In short, it appears to document that anyone committing one of the nine offences was sentenced to death. The king and his high-ranking officials might have appropriated Buddhist words and expressions while drafting rules and regulations in order to showcase their morality.

Moreover, the difference between secular and Buddhist literature is difficult to define. Furthermore, those falling into the classification of secular literary works, but part(s) of the stories deals with the Buddha's teachings. Of the manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode, BAD-13-1-0002 is a good example of those that pertain to this category. This manuscript contains the story of Nang Kinnali whose husband was shot dead by a king because the king fell in love with her and wanted to make her his wife; however, she refused him. The story suggests that the king breached the Five Precepts (*phit sin ha* ຜິດສິນຫ້າ) of Buddhist teachings.

Like the texts and stories related to literary works, some of the texts relate to customs and rituals reflected in Buddhist teachings. Manuscript BAD-13-1-069 contains information on the twelve-month customs by listing the customs of each lunar month, from

the first to the twelfth. Only the custom of the seventh month is not directly related to Buddhism. It seems that at least one ritual ceremony is performed during each month, albeit some activities are not only relevant to Buddhism, but also animism and Brahmanism.

Throughout Chapter 4, it has been shown that Buddhist monasteries in Luang Prabang and Laos function as repositories, not only for Buddhist manuscripts, but other texts as well. The manuscripts unrelated to Buddhism relate to various matters traditionally practiced even before the introduction of Buddhism to Laos. Given that these texts were kept in monastic libraries and the abodes of senior monks, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist manuscripts are evidence of the demands that the Buddhist community placed on monastic members. In other words, monastic members have been traditionally required to gather knowledge about both religious and secular subjects. Finally, some of the manuscripts were clearly written with modern tool and employed modern writing techniques. Such matters are discussed in the next chapter.



## Chapter 5

### Modernity reflected in manuscripts

Not only does the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan consist of manuscripts written according to the tradition, it also comprises some manuscripts that reflect the influence of modern writing techniques. Indeed, some manuscripts, for example, were written on factory-produced palm-leaves and paper. As such, this chapter discusses texts, passages, writing supports, and tools that demonstrate the new methods employed for the writing of manuscripts in Luang Prabang.

#### 1. Revisions and Additions

Several manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode contain newly added texts. These texts were used in order to introduce the main texts/stories, and to explain or to provide additional details in various sections of the manuscripts. As discussed in Chapter 4, some insertions were added in order to serve as a set of instructions for using the manuscript.

#### Manuscript BAD-13-1-0287

BAD-13-1-0287 is an untitled manuscript, which comprises only two palm leaves measuring 49.7 cm in length and 4.5 cm in width. This is a loose manuscript that appears to have been separated from a palm-leaf fascicle. The text was written in the modern Lao script in ballpoint pen with blue ink. There are three columns and five lines on each page. Cardinal numbers were applied for the pagination of the leaves.

The manuscript contains information about the performance of an act of merit-making, probably held in 1990. The content of this manuscript presents the background of Chao Phetsarat (1890–1959) and a rite of dedicating merit to him. This ritual ceremony was organized by President Souphanouvong (1909–1995). The first part of this text reads:

ບັດນີ້ອາຕະມາພາບຈະໄດ້ວິສັດຊະນາຖວາຍພະທຳມະເທສະໜາ ສະຫຼອງພະເດດພະຄຸນ  
ປະດັບປັນຍາປາລະມີອະນຸໂມທະນາສ່ວນກຸສົນບຸນຍະລາສີທັກຂຶ້ນານຸປະທານະກິດ ເຊິ່ງທ່ານ  
ສຸພານຸວົງອົງປະທານປະເທດຜູ້ເປັນພະອະນຸຊາ ນ້ອງຊາຍຂອງສົມເດັດເຈົ້າມະຫາອຸບປະຮາດ

ເພັດຊະລາດລັດຕະນະວົງສາ ແລະໝໍ່ມວຽງຄໍາຜູ້ເປັນພັນລະຍາ ພາກັນມາລະລຶກເຖິງພະ  
ມະຫາກະລຸນາອຸປະກາລະຄຸນໃນພະເຊດຖາ (ອົງພີ່ອ້າຍ) ຄືສົມເດັດເຈົ້າມະຫາອຸປະຮາດ  
ເພັດຊະລາດລັດຕະນະວົງສາ.

Now, I shall give a sermon celebrating the Perfection of Wisdom, on [the occasion of] performing an act of merit-making on behalf of the deceased. [This ceremony was organised by] President Souphanouvong, together with his spouse, Mòm Viangkham. The President is the younger brother of His Majesty Maha Uppahat Phetsarat Rattnavongsa. [He and his spouse organized this ceremony] to commemorate the deceased, His Majesty Maha Uppahat Phetsarat Rattnavongsa, who was their *pha settha* (elder brother) and supported them generously when he was alive.

Unsurprisingly given the context, this text replete with royal language, and thereby signifies that the scribe was bestowing great honour on the organizer of the ceremony. Although President Souphanouvong had already renounced his royal lineage vis-à-vis Luang Prabang when this text was written, the scribe continued to view him as a prince nevertheless. He, therefore, used the language of the court in his composition, which is also difficult for many common people to understand. This also reflects his ability to adapt language according to the appropriate circumstances as necessary. Additionally, this text was written for a specific purpose and it might have only been used a single time; as such, it is possible that this led to improper storage and the consequent deterioration of the manuscript.

One interesting part of the life of Chao Phetsarat in this manuscript concerns the origins of the people's beliefs about him. Chao Phetsarat was, and is still, thought of by many Lao people to have been endowed with supernatural powers. Therefore, it is not unusual that the text relates some natural events that occurred prior to the morning of his passing. This part of the text reads:

ຮອດວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໒ ຄໍ່າ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປີກັດໃຕ້ ພ.ສ. 2502 [ກົງກັບ] ວັນທີ 14 ຕຸລາ [ຄ.ສ.]  
1959 ຊົງປະຊວນ. ເວລາໃກ້ທ່ຽງກາງຄືນເກີດແຜ່ນດິນໄຫວ ແລ້ວຝົນຕົກ. ຄັນຮອດເວລາ 5  
ໂມງ 30 ນາທີ ໄດ້ສິ້ນພະຊົນດ້ວຍໂລກຄວາມດັນໂລຫິດສູງ.

Reaching the twelfth day of the waxing moon, in the eleventh lunar month, a *kat khai* year, BE 2502, [corresponding to] October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1959, [he] fell ill. Before midnight there was an earthquake and rain. The next day, at 5:30 am [Chao Phetsarat] passed away due to high blood pressure.



There is no concrete evidence to suggest that there was an earthquake in Luang Prabang on the night of October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1959. This short account indicates that the person who wrote this biography of Chao Phetsarat followed and respected local beliefs in regard to his supernatural powers. It is possible that there was heavy rain, however, as this would have been normal towards the end of the rainy season. Such natural circumstances transpire during this time of the year. Indeed, a Lao proverb elucidates “*fon sang fa* ຝົນສັ່ງຟ້າ”, which means “the rain says farewell to the sky”; this refers to the last downpour of the year, which is usually so heavy that it lasts for up to half a day. Prior to the deluge, strong winds and loud thunder frequently occur to shake the people’s houses. These phenomena are reflected in Lao proverbs, for instance, “*fa pin phaen din vai* ຟ້າປິ້ນ ແຜ່ນດິນໄຫວ”, which translates as: “the sky turns itself over, the ground is shaken.” This suggests that people had witnessed powerful storms which damaged property and even caused injury or death (Thongkham 2003: 221, Khamphun 2011: 77).

Not only is this manuscript an introduction to a text that is supposed to be read as a sermon, it also confirms that a majority of Lao Buddhists take part in acts of merit-making on behalf of the deceased. Like other Theravada Buddhists in Southeast Asia, Lao Buddhists believe that acquired merit can be transferred to the deceased. This merit can help to prolong the life of the deceased who have been reborn in a pleasant place, and to shorten the life of the deceased living in an unpleasant place. With regard to Burmese Buddhism, Spiro explains:

Since, after the first seven days, the deceased have already been reborn, the merit is intended either to prolong their stay in their heavenly abode (if that is where they are), or to shorten their stay in one of the painful abodes (if that is where they are) (Spiro 1982: 124–5).

It seems that the person who wrote this manuscript also wanted to maintain the family relations between the Lao people who were still alive and their relatives who had already passed away. However, such relationships are not the same as when everyone is still alive, but rather the links between the living and the dead (Terwiel 2012: 260). After cremation, as we can still see in the daily practices of the Lao people, the bones of some of the deceased are usually placed in stupas or *that* (ທາດ). In the houses of the living, the photographs of the deceased are placed in honourable places. During traditional festivals and ritual ceremonies, the living regularly light incense sticks and candles at the stupas and near the photographs, notifying the spirits of the deceased of such important occasions.

The use of a ballpoint pen and the manuscript's layout in three columns also demonstrate the application of modern technology to the manuscript-making process. It is especially rare to discover the use of a ballpoint pen on palm leaves. The writer might have found that the work of incision with a stylus was too time-consuming and decided to use a ballpoint pen instead to save time.

### **The insertion in manuscript BAD-13-1-0163**

Manuscript no. BAD-13-1-0163, made for the commemoration of the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its donor's birthday, contains five *Anisong* texts. They discuss the merit gained from being partly responsible for an ordination ceremony (*Salòng buat* ສະຫຼອງບວດ), giving *kathin*<sup>103</sup> to a monk (*Sòng kathina than* ສອງກະຖິນນະທານ), offering bathing cloths<sup>104</sup> to monks and novices (*Sòng pha ap namfon* ສອງຜ້າອາບນ້ຳຝົນ), donating robes to monks during a funeral (*Sòng bangsukun* ສອງບັງສຸກຸນ), and the offering of robes (*Sòng chivòn* ສອງຈິວອນ). This manuscript comprises 31 palm leaves that measure 53.8 cm in length and 4.5 cm in width, with an additional two blank leaves. All texts of this manuscript were written in the Tham Lao script. Both Sanskrit orthography and numbers were applied for the pagination. According to its colophon, this manuscript was made on a Wednesday, the tenth day of the waxing moon, in the eleventh lunar month of the Year of the Monkey, BE 2487, which corresponds to 27 September 1944 AD.

The insertion is written in Tham-Lao script and appears in the last part of the first text; it describes the merit gained by organizing ordination ceremonies (see Figure 5.1 below). The insertion attempts to provide a clearer explanation of the text through the utilization of examples. One example speaks of a woman whose son leaves her and becomes ordained as a novice without her permission. The story relates how the women once went to the jungle in search of firewood and took a nap under a big tree on the way home. She then dreams that the God of Death came to her and asked her whether she had made merit or not. Learning that she has never performed an act of merit-making, the God of Death then takes her to Hell. When she sees the fire of Hell, she tells him that the colour

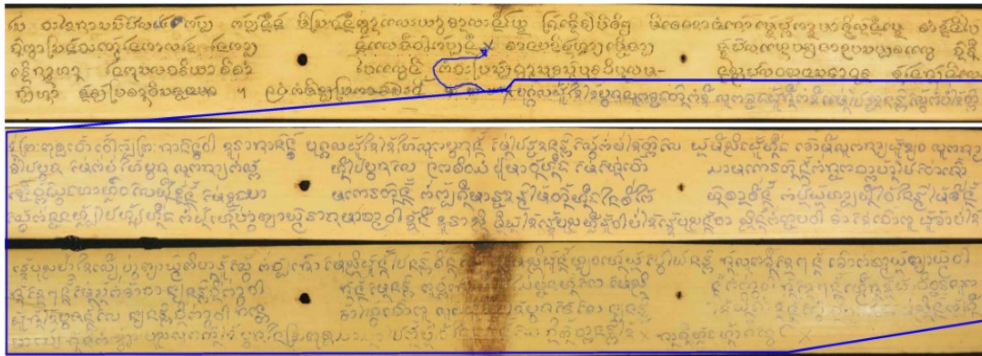
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<sup>103</sup> *Kathin* is the name of a traditional Buddhist festival held after the Buddhist Lent (*òk phansa* ອອກພັນສາ) (McClung 1975: 196), between the first day of the waning moon, the eleventh lunar month and the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, the twelfth lunar month (*tae haem kham nüng düan sip-et thoeng düan sip-sòng pheng* ແຕ່ແຮມຄຳນຶ່ງເດືອນສິບເອັດເຖິງເດືອນສິບສອງເພັງ). The main offering to be given to monk in this festival is a set of robes (*pha kathin* ຜ້າກະຖິນ), which is initiated by a single donor or a group of donors.

<sup>104</sup> These cloths are usually white in colour, which are given to monks at the festival that marks the beginning of the Buddhist Lent (*bun khao phansa* ບຸນເຂົ້າພັນສາ) on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon in the eighth lunar month.

of the fire is similar to the colour of her son's robe. The God of Death knew that this meant her son must be a novice, so he returned her to her home, after which she lay down for a nap.

Figure 5.1: The inserted explanation with examples



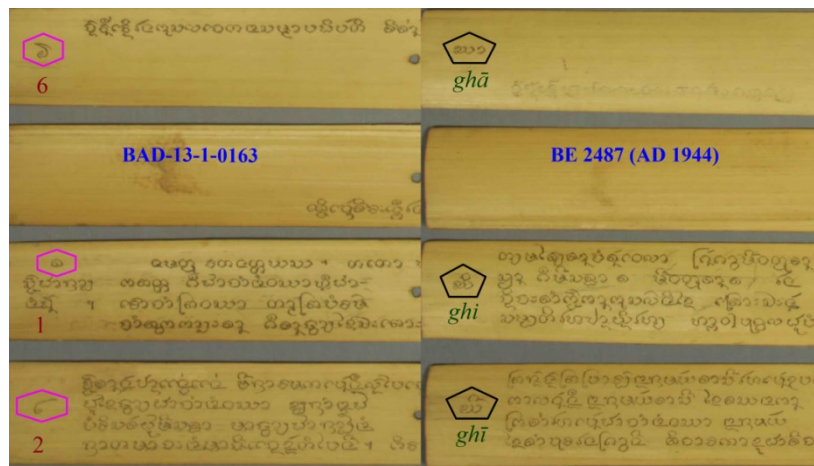
This manuscript reflects the wide-spread belief that women can gain merit through the ordination of their sons even if they are against him doing so – thus, it almost goes without saying that when one gives permission to their son to become ordained as a novice or monk, s/he is believed to gain significantly more merit than the woman in the example. This belief is reflected in funeral rites, a time during which relatives, frequently including close friends, become ordained as novices and nuns in order to lead the coffin to the crematorium (*buat chung* ပဝဂ်ချွၵ်). These relatives usually return to their normal lives after the cremation, although some, especially sons or grandsons of the deceased, may stay in the monastery until the ceremony of merit-making on behalf of the deceased (*chaek khao* ဇော့ခိၵ်) is completed.

Of the five texts only this one has been interpolated by an insertion. Although the insertion is also written in Tham-Lao script, a ball-point pen was used instead of a stylus. Furthermore, two palm leaves, one after the text on robe offerings at funerals, and one after the text on giving robes to monks, are blank. This indicates that the person who wrote this insertion might have given priority to the merit gained by organizing an ordination as this directly promotes the continuation of Buddhism. He might have thought that an increased number of monks and novices was indicative of more belief in the Buddhist faith.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, numbers are used alongside combinations of consonants and vowels according to Sanskrit orthography when counting the folios of palm-leaf manuscripts. The use of numbers for the pagination of folios of palm-leaf manuscripts reflects the concept of the development of counting the palm leaves. The development is based upon the traditional way of counting such leaves, in essence, counting each leaf, not each page (see Chapter 2). In other words, numbers were only

added to leaves paginated by using the combinations of consonants and vowels consistent with Sanskrit orthography. The scribe might have thought that numbers would make it easier for readers to distinguish the leaves, especially for big fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts comprising over one hundred leaves. Despite the low number of leaves in this work, the scribe still chose this form of pagination (see Figure 5.2). Furthermore, he might also have thought that the combinations of consonants and vowels would make readers confused because only twelve Sanskrit vowels were used in combination with consonants to count the leaves (see Chapter 2). If a string of a palm-leaf manuscript is torn, the folios of that manuscript scatter. If there were no pagination in the left-hand margins, it would be very difficult to reassemble the scattered folios.

Figure 5.2: Two systems of paginations, different usage



As shown in Figure 5.2, combinations of one consonant and three vowels consistent with Sanskrit orthography – *ghā*, *ghi* and *ghī* (depicted above in pentagons) – were used to count the leaves in a reliable manner, whereas numbers were not used in the same way. The numbers were used to count the leaves containing a single text; in effect, the number “1” appears in the left margin of the first leaf bearing each text. The number “6” (pictured in a hexagon) appears in the margin of the first leaf and no number appears in the second one, whereas the numbers “1” and “2” (again, in hexagons) appear in the left-hand margins of the third and the fourth leaves respectively. This indicates that this manuscript might have originally been numerated with combinations of consonants and vowels stipulated by Sanskrit orthography, but then it was re-paginated later with numbers by another user or scribe. The person who completed re-numerations might have thought that each text had its beginning and end and, therefore, that the manuscripts should be numbered in the same way. In addition, he might have thought that this manuscript – containing five texts with

their own numerations – was a suitable candidate to be made into a set of five small fascicles of palm-leaf manuscripts.

## 2. Corrections

A number of manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode contain various types of corrections. Some letters or words are crossed out, with a new letter or word inserted above or below the crossed out content. The symbol /x/ is used in many places to indicate a missing letter or word, above which the missing word is written in. This aspect may be recognized as a clear sign of a change in the way Buddhist texts here were purified and passed on. However, the tool used to mark the symbol /x/ and write corrections was not the same that was used to write the text because the text itself was written with a stylus. When writing on palm leaves with a stylus, many steps must be taken to make the writing visible. In order to facilitate faster work, or perhaps simply due to easier accessibility, a ballpoint pen was used for these revisions. As Agrawal (1984: 32) states, incisions on palm leaves with a stylus are not easily legible. To make them visible, lamp-black or charcoal powder mixed with oil is required. This might be one reason why some scribes made numerous mistakes in their works. Furthermore, texts containing numerous words originating from Pali are more challenging because many scribes experience in Pali. If mistakes were made while writing a manuscript, they can remain in that manuscript for an inestimable period of time.

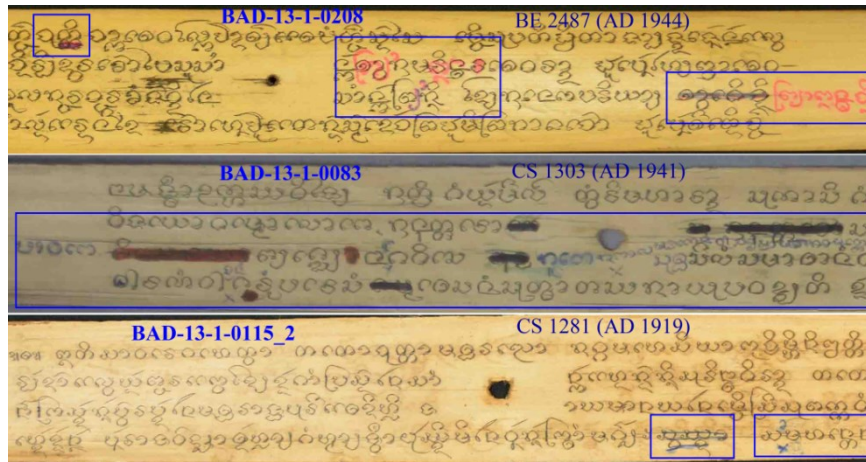
According to ancient beliefs, manuscripts are never to be treated disrespectfully or kept in a low-level place, regardless of whether they were carefully written and copied. The texts of the manuscripts, especially those on rituals, should not be modified or interpolated; anyone breaking this rule will lose respect in the eyes of faithful Buddhists. Furthermore, laywomen are not allowed to touch religious manuscripts directly, even if they are the donors of these. In the manuscript-donating ceremony, the manuscript has to be wrapped in a cloth and placed on a bowl or plate. A female donor can then carry the manuscript by lifting the bowl with her arms in order to respect the manuscripts. During Sathu Nyai Khamchan's lifetime, although manuscripts were still regarded as sacred, it was permissible to study these scientifically. In former times, in contrast, the correctness of spelling was considered less important than the sacredness of every variant of the Dhamma script.<sup>105</sup> In other words, the senior monks of Luang Prabang concerned about the purity of

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<sup>105</sup> For more details about palm-leaf manuscripts containing corrections, see manuscripts no. BAD-13-1-0002, BAD-13-1-0014, BAD-13-1-0017, BAD-13-1-0023, BAD-13-1-0028, BAD-13-1-0029, BAD-13-1-0059, BAD-13-1-0065, BAD-13-1-0067, BAD-13-1-0070, BAD-13-1-0073, BAD-13-1-0075, BAD-13-1-0088, BAD-13-1-0104, BAD-13-1-0105, BAD-13-1-0113, BAD-13-1-0114, BAD-13-1-0139, BAD-13-1-0148, BAD-13-1-0149,

the Buddhist texts, paid more attention to the variations of texts written on both palm-leaf and paper manuscripts than to their sacredness.

Figure 5.3: Three examples of corrected texts



The titles of manuscripts BAD-13-1-0208 and BAD-13-1-0083 are the same, *Unhatsavisai*, and these contain words in Pali. The Pali words are recognized as *khatha unhatsavisai* (ຄຳຖາອຸບັດສະວິໄຊ) by devout Buddhists.<sup>106</sup> The former manuscript, written in AD 1944, comprises five palm leaves, while the latter was written in AD 1941 and consists of 11 palm leaves. *Unhatsavisai* is a sacred text read as a sermon in ceremonies for expelling misfortune from one’s body and bringing good luck. As Figure 5.3 shows, however, this text contained a number of mistakes. Therefore, numerous corrections were made by a senior monk, probably Sathu Nyai Khamchan, who had much experience in reading various Buddhist texts. As a senior monk, he seemed regularly to collect and check all types of manuscripts containing Buddhist texts.

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BAD-13-1-0150, BAD-13-1-0153, BAD-13-1-0154, BAD-13-1-0155, BAD-13-1-0156, BAD-13-1-0157, BAD-13-1-0160, BAD-13-1-0163, BAD-13-1-0169, BAD-13-1-0176, BAD-13-1-0177, BAD-13-1-0178, BAD-13-1-0183, BAD-13-1-0186, BAD-13-1-0188, BAD-13-1-0191, BAD-13-1-0193, BAD-13-1-0195, BAD-13-1-0196, BAD-13-1-0200, BAD-13-1-0208, BAD-13-1-0218, BAD-13-1-0222, BAD-13-1-0223, BAD-13-1-0224, BAD-13-1-0225, BAD-13-1-0238, BAD-13-1-0246, BAD-13-1-0247, BAD-13-1-0248, BAD-13-1-0280, BAD-13-1-0287, BAD-13-1-0292, BAD-13-1-0296, BAD-13-1-0297, BAD-13-1-0302, BAD-13-1-0306, BAD-13-1-0307, BAD-13-1-0321.

<sup>106</sup> Some Lao Buddhists believe that *khatha unhatsavisai* can remove misfortune from a human body. A person confronted with various health problems, such as incurable diseases ( Lao: *pha-nyat pua bò sao* ພະຍາດປົວບໍ່ເຊົາ), is believed to have “lost their fate” (Lao: *sata khat* ຊາຕາຂາດ). They must organize a rite to remove such maladies in order to prolong his/her life. For more details about this ceremony, please see Thongkham 2003, pp. 325–330.

The abstract of the story reads as follows:

When the Buddha was alive, he travelled to Heaven to preach the Dhamma to his mother, who had been reborn as a goddess with the name Sirimahamaya. At that time, the stay of the god Supatithita was about to expire in only one week, after which he was to be reborn as a hell-being, various species of animals and the disabled for thousands of lives (*sat* ຊາດ) because of his bad deeds in former lives. He was very upset by this, so he went to ask for help from Lord Indra, who then led him to the Buddha. Lord Inrda told the Buddha everything about Supatithita. The Buddha then preached the Unhatsavisai to Indra and Supatithita, instructing Supatithita to repeat their respect for the Triple Gem repeatedly. Supatithita was very proud after listening to the sermon and following the instructions – he still lives in Heaven. He will come down to be reborn as a man and attain Arahanta in the age of the next Buddha, namely Ariya Metteyya.

The Pali words in the Unhatsavisai text are supposed to have been chanted by the Buddha, so these words have been and are still recognized as sacred words by devout Lao Buddhists. Therefore, senior monks cognisant of Pali and the content of the text, scrupulously examine the texts written in the both the Lao vernacular and Pali. The corrections and insertions share a similar charactersic: in essence, the insertions are only found in the first texts of both manuscripts. In addition, these manuscripts were produced for the commemoration of the twenty-fourth birthday of Sathu Nyai Khamchan's. The colophons of the texts contained in these manuscripts are identical. They read:

ພະວິລະຈິດໂຕ (ຄໍາຈັນ) ວັດແສນ ສ້າງໄວ້ໃນພຸດທະສາສະໜາ ເມື່ອວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄໍ່າ  
ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປີວອກ (ກາບສັນ) ພ.ສ. ໒໔໘໗ ເພື່ອເປັນທີ່ລະລຶກໃນຄາວອາຍຸຄົບ ໒ ຮອບ.

Pha Virachitto (Khamchan) of Vat Saen made [this manuscript] in the Buddhist faith on Wednesday, the tenth day of the waxing moon in the eleventh lunar month of the Year of the Monkey (a *kap san* year), BE 2487 (AD 1944, the twenty-seventh of September, Wednesday); with the purpose of commemorating his completion of the second [animal] cycle.

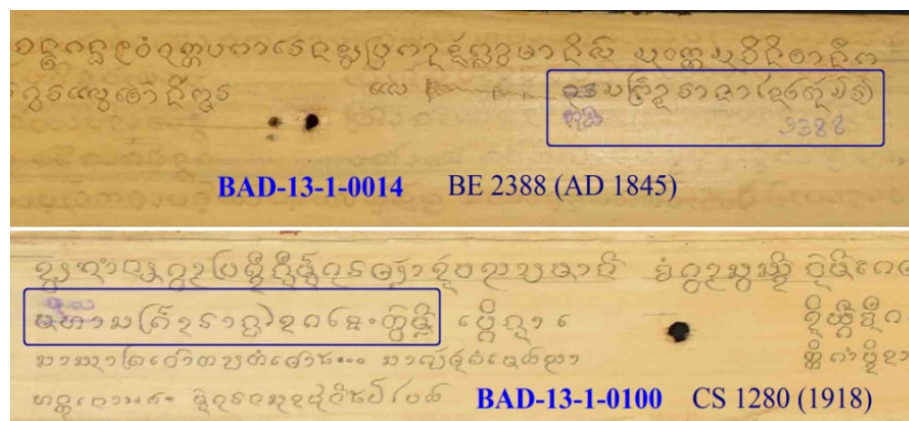
This colophon and the presence of an insertion in manuscript BAD-13-1-0163 and corrections in BAD-13-1-0208 all demonstrate that Sathu Nyai Khamchan, not only made manuscripts to commemorate the twenty-fourth anniversary of his birthday, but that he also selected some manuscripts to be revised, explained and corrected with insertions.



In essence, Sathu Nyai Khamchan appears to have been very concerned whether manuscripts contained mistakes, and the conditions in which they were kept. Accordingly, numerous manuscripts found in the Sathu Nyai Khamchan's contain a variety of unusual insertions, corrections, and other passages.

Sometimes the colophons have also been corrected. The corrections made in colophons usually pertain to the names of the era, for instance, the Chulasakarat (Minor Era) and Buddhist Era (see Figure 5.4 below). Such errors indicate that the scribe who wrote these colophons wrote the main text(s) based on their own recollections rather than copying the content directly from another manuscript. This means that a scribe possessing knowledge about other subjects related to texts is able to write more appropriate colophons.

Figure 5.4: Two examples of corrections to era names



As Figure 5.4 illustrates, the colophon dates manuscript BAD-13-1-0014 as Chulasakarat (Minor Era) 2388 – that is to say, AD 3026! - which is, of course, impossible. The Minor Era begins in AD 638 (Chao Phetsarat 2001: 37), so that Chulasakarat 2388 is equivalent to AD 3026/3027 (2388 + 638) – about 1011 years in the future. The person who corrected the name of the era obviously noticed that he had made a mistake at this point, so he crossed out the word *chula* and wrote *phuttha* under it. If 2388 is Buddhist Era, this colophon was written in AD 1845/1846, which makes much more sense.

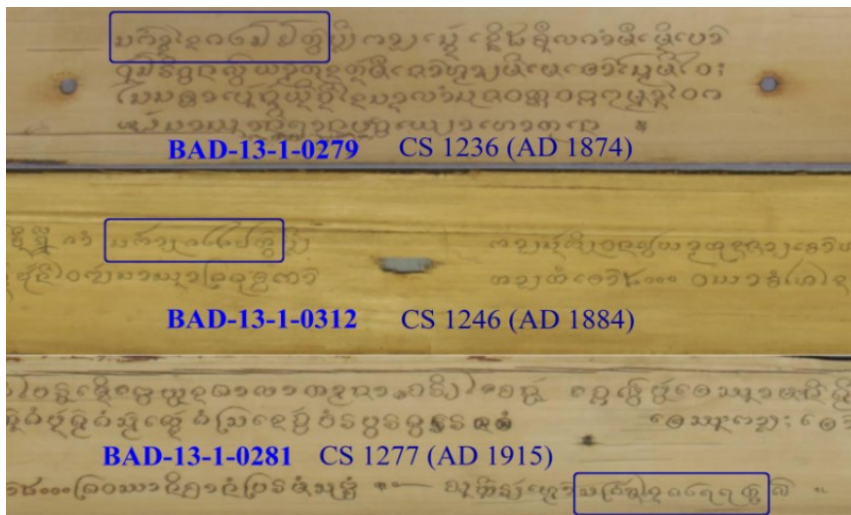
Similarly, the colophon of manuscript BAD-13-1-0100 is dated Mahasakarat (Greater Era) 1280, which is rather unlikely, as the Greater Era begins in AD 78 (*Ibid.*: 35). Thus, the colophon of the manuscript was written in AD 1358/1359 (1280 + 78), or in the year that Buddhism was first officially introduced to Laos (Lorrillard 2003: 188; Sila 2001: 45–46). In fact, Buddhist sermon-chants did not flourish in the Kingdom of Lan Xang (Laos) until the sixteenth century (Phouvong 1959: 338), and the movement of manuscripts



between the regions of Lan Xang and Lan Na (Northern Thailand) did not begin until the second decade of the same century (McDaniel 2009: 128–129; Sila 2001: 63). Therefore, the person who crossed out *maha* and wrote *chula* above might have no doubt that in the first year of the presence of Buddhism in Laos there had been nobody who could write the Tham-Lao script on palm-leaf. In addition, he also might have scholarly expertise regarding the history of Buddhism in Laos.

Similar to scribes who wrote colophons but had no experience in learning other subjects or contents related to the colophons, such as chronology and calendrical systems, mistakes may have been caused by some colophons containing dates with no era names (see Figure 5.5 below). Some traditional scholars did not seem to care about the name of the eras that they used in their works. Therefore, they just wrote the word *sangkat* (era) followed by the date in numerals. Some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were written in the same way, with the colophons containing the either the word *sangkat* or *pi* (year) only. During the process of copying these colophons, some scribes may have added the era name in front of the word *sangkat* and *pi*. If this was done incorrectly then it may lead to confusion among later readers. This should only not be considered to be copying errors, but the master from which they copied the text also created the chance for and guided them to make mistakes. This means that mistakes may not be made (by the people who copied the colophons) if the master is correct.

Figure 5.5: Three examples of dates appearing without era names



As the figure shows, all of the colophons of manuscripts BAD-13-1-0279, BAD-13-1-0312 and BAD-13-1-0281 contain dates with no era names. The first colophon is dated 1236, the second one 1246 and the last one 1277. The correct era here should be *chunla*,

not *maha* or *phuttha*. Scribes copying such works likely applied whatever era name they were most familiar with, thereby causing certain discrepancies regarding the dates mentioned in the manuscripts. The table below demonstrates the most plausible era mentioned in these texts and how these conclusions were devised.

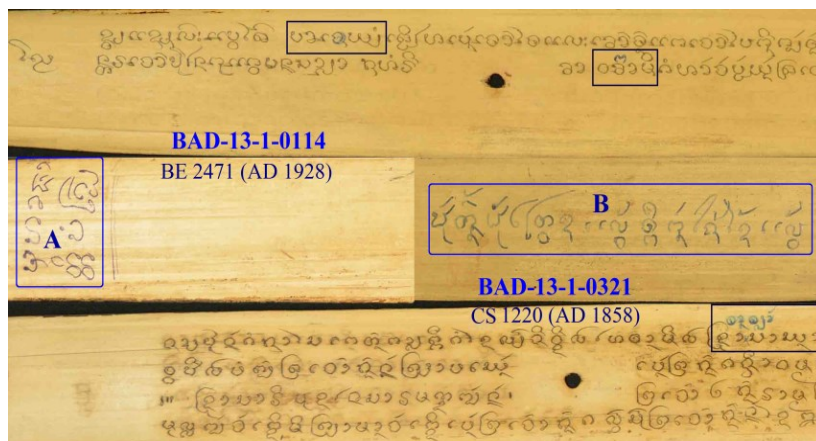
Table 5.1: Calculation of most plausible eras for dates

Estimated names of eras	BAD-13-1-0279 <i>sangkat</i> 1236	BAD-13-1-0312 <i>sangkat</i> 1246	BAD-13-1-0281 <i>sangkat</i> 1277
Phutthasakarāt (Buddhist Era)	- 543 = AD 693	- 543 = AD 703	- 543 = AD 734
Mahasakarāt (Greater Era)	+ 78 = AD 1314	+ 78 = AD 1324	+ 78 = AD 1355
Chulasakarāt (Minor Era)	+ 638 = AD 1874	+ 638 = AD 1884	+ 638 = AD 1915

Table 5.1 shows that only the Minor Era (Chulasakarāt) is appropriate for these dates. If the Great Era (Mahasakarāt) or Buddha Era were applied, they would date the manuscripts as more than 660 years old; that is to say, prior to the founding of the Kingdom of Lan Xang (Evans 2002: 10; Sila 2001: 36). This suggests that such manuscripts need to be read carefully, especially in terms of their dating systems. A Lao proverb, *nangsü nangha* ພັງສີພັງຫາ literally means, “skin [that contained] character, skin [that contained character needs to be] sought for [the truth]”, supports this method of studying Lao manuscripts. This means some literary works may contain surplus parts and some parts may be missing.

The corrections of the manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan seem to have been done regularly alongside the checking of the manuscripts, probably by Sathu Nyai Khamchan himself, in order to make sure that longer manuscripts were arranged correctly. If it was difficult to distinguish between different versions, then it was possible that the fascicles could get mixed up. Therefore, when using texts written on palm-leaf comprising more than one fascicle, it was necessary to make sure that they were from the same version. In practice, palm-leaf manuscripts containing different versions of the same text always pose a challenge to the reader if they are too long for a single fascicle. Therefore, long texts written in many fascicles need to be checked regularly; in short, they should not only be checked with the versions according to which they belong, but also with the contents that were written in each fascicle.

Figure 5.6: Two examples of checked manuscripts



The passage appearing in manuscript BAD-13-1-0114, written in Tham-Lan Na (A), reads, “ມະຫາຊາດບໍ່ຄົບ”, which means: “Vessantara Jataka, incomplete.” The other passage appears in manuscript BAD-13-1-0321, written in Tham Lao (B), in which modern orthography was applied. In essence, the second tone mark (ໄມ້ໂທ) was used five times and reads, “ຜູກຕົ້ນຜູກ ໒ ຕວດແລ້ວຖືກກັນ ໃຊ້ໄດ້ແລ້ວ”, means: “the first and second fascicles have already been examined. They match each other [or are the same version], and are ready to be used.” Both messages convey that the person who wrote them was very concerned about the usage of different texts written in palm-leaf manuscripts with multiple fascicles. He must have had experience in using such versions, otherwise he would not have pressed this issue by leaving these passages in the manuscripts. He seems to have wanted to remind readers and users to pay close attention to long texts written over many fascicles of palm leaves in order to make sure they were from the same version.

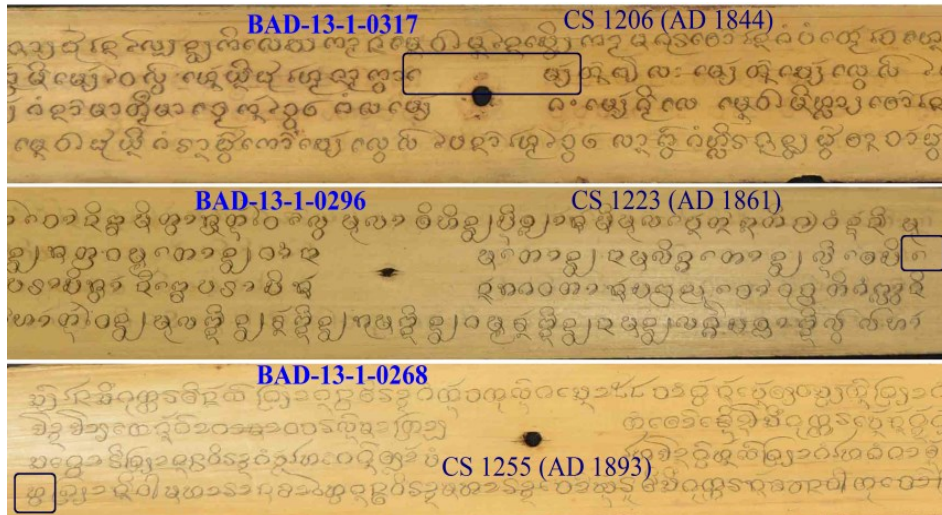
### 3. Styles of Writing Manuscripts

#### 3.1 Traditional style

Traditionally, manuscripts were written without blank spaces between words. Any spaces were usually due to causes such as a crack on the surface of the palm leaf (*lan taek haeng* ລານແຕກແຫງ) or the edge of the palm leaf (*son lan suai* ສິ້ນລານສ້ວຍ) and the spaces for making string holes (*hu sai sanòng* ຮູສາຍສະໜອງ). In other words, these spaces are not related to any writing norms. Furthermore, punctuation marks, such as commas, question marks, and other similar markings used in present-day writing were not used. In addition, characters that are combined to form a word are frequently separated onto different lines if the word appears at the end of a line and there is insufficient space for it. If, for example, a word with five characters was written at the end of a line where there was only enough

space for three characters, the first three characters of the word are written at the end of that line, while the final two letters are written at the beginning of the next line. This is a challenge for new readers.

Figure 5.7: Traditional style of writing (separately written letters)

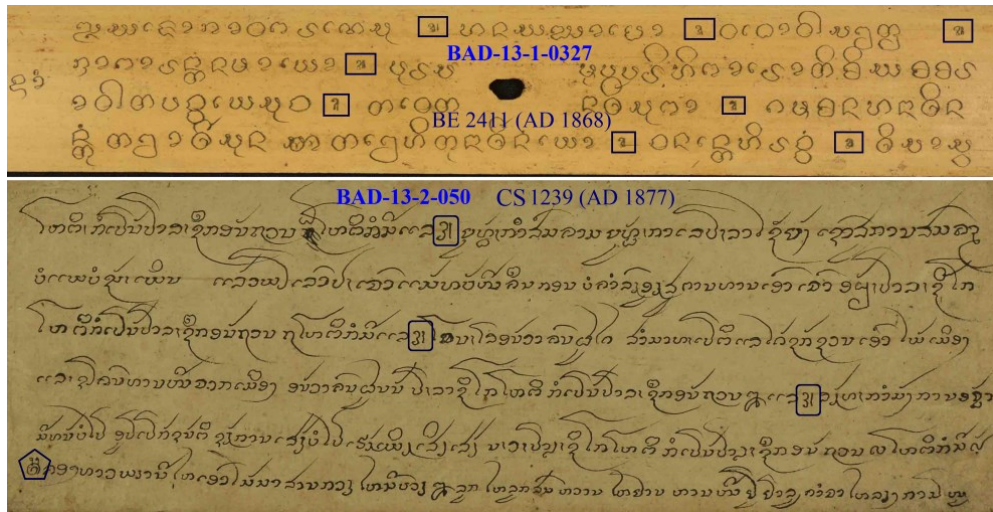


As shown in Figure 5.7, manuscript BAD-13-1-0317 contains one word written in this split fashion, in the second line where the string hole has been placed. The word “ເມຍ” (wife) is separated so that the character /ເ/ is to the left of the string hole and /-ມຍ/ is on the right at the beginning of the next line, despite the fact that about 5–6 characters could be written in the space between them. There is another example in the second line of manuscript BAD-13-1-0296. Here, only /ເ/ is on this line, so we must look to the third line, in effect, the line below, to see the rest of the word. Similarly, /-ຫວ/ appears at the beginning of the fourth line of manuscript BAD-13-1-0268, so we cannot read this word unless we refer to the end of the previous line (the third line).

However, some manuscripts with colophons written before the twentieth century found in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan contain some conventional marks of writing. It seems that the marks were used in order to indicate the space between short portions of the texts, especially texts in Pali. Additionally, some symbols also appear in several bilingual texts, specifically, texts compiled as word-by-word translations or explanations of Pali into Lao (see Figure 5.8 below). This means each portion begins with a Pali word or its variant and is followed by a translation or an explanation in Lao. This allows readers unfamiliar Pali to understand the content of the texts.



Figure 5.8: Conventional symbol usage (within texts)



This figure shows one symbol (in rectangles) appearing eight times on one page of the short palm-leaf manuscript BAD-13-1-0327. The manuscript comprises 63 palm leaves with five blank leaves, written in Tham-Lao in AD 1868, and is entitled *Pha Bali Sut Mon* (ພະບາລີສູດມົນ), which means a “Pali chant”. The person who wrote this manuscript might have thought that the text in Pali was difficult to read and learn, especially considering its extended length. Therefore, he divided the texts into many portions and used a symbol to mark the division between parts. There is empty space between the symbol and each portion of the text, so that the spaces between portions will be wider if there is no symbol. The spaces can also function as lines between portions.

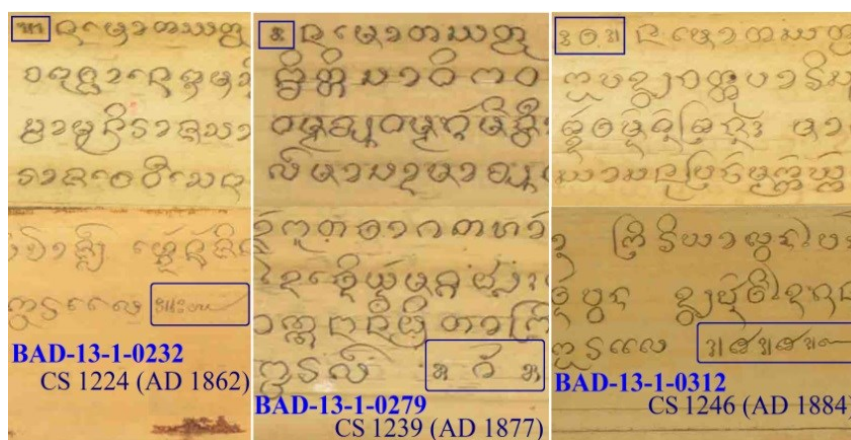
Unlike manuscript BAD-13-1-0327, the writing support of manuscript BAD-13-2-050 is mulberry paper. The contents of this multiple-text manuscript are varied, but the contents of Figure 5.8 above are from the *Palasük 9 Tua* or “Nine-Fatal Offenses” (see Chapter 4). This text was written in as a verbatim translation with additional explanations. The symbol used to mark the line between portions (shown in rounded rectangles) was used three times in this text. However, there is no space between the symbol and the portions. The shape of the symbol used in this text is similar to the one used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0327. It comprises two marks: the first one is similar to the number /3/ and the other one is a vertical line, so it looks something like this: /3|. Its shape is similar to the vowel /a/ in Devanagari script (Sanskrit) /अ/. However, this symbol does not appear at the end of the last portion of the text, so it only functions only as a mark for separating parts within the body of the text in a manner probably similar to a comma and semicolon, rather than not to mark its end (in essence, a full stop).

Other symbols also appear in manuscript BAD-13-2-050. One of them appears at the beginning of the last line in Figure 5.8 and seems to mark that a new text started from this point onwards. This symbol is similar to the consonant /d/ in Tham-Lao script /ᨾ/ and there are two signs, which resemble the vowel /ə/ in Lao, above it. This symbol was used many times in this manuscript – not only to announce a new text, but also to name the title. It seems that this symbol was placed in front of every text and passage, regardless of whether they were long or short. Therefore, the symbol itself functions as an element of the text.

The person who created and used the above mentioned symbols might have intended to help his readers and users to understand the work more easily. Such symbols clearly function as non-textual elements supporting the text. In addition, texts without any symbol or space are less attractive than those containing various symbols. This is similar to the way in which modern publications contain not only texts, but also photographs, diagrams and charts. Therefore, the person who used these conventional marks might have wanted to make their works more interesting, noticeable and easier to understand. A number of symbols used in manuscript were created based on a particular character; as such these symbols might reflect the specific writing styles of the scribes and carry meaning within themselves.

Traditionally, symbols were frequently applied in manuscript-writing to mark the beginning and end of texts. The shapes of the symbols varied depending on who wrote the texts and used such symbols; it seems that these were often created and developed by individual scribes (see Figure 5.8 above). This demonstrates that Lao Buddhist scholars in ancient times utilised these symbols for the same purpose; in effect, they wanted to mark the beginning and end of the texts clear for the benefit of readers. However, different scribes used different symbols to fulfil this purpose.

Figure 5.9: Conventional symbol usage (Start – End)



Throughout Figure 5.9, the scribes of all three manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0232, BAD-13-1-0279, and BAD-13-1-0312 – open their works with the same words in Pali, *namo tassatthu*<sup>107</sup> (ນະໂມຕັດສັດຖຸ), which was and is still recognized as an exclamation of adoration at the beginning of a manuscript. The scribes all end their works with the same word in Lao “ກ່ອນແລ”, which is a final particle used to announce the completion of a sentence. However, the symbols used to mark the beginning of three texts (in rectangles) and the ends of the texts (in rounded rectangles) are different from each other. Some of the signs used to indicate the beginning of the text are also used at its conclusion, and the number of the signs symbolizing the end of the text is greater than those marking the beginning.

The symbols used to mark the beginning and the end of a text might have first been one and the same, and then later developed over time through multiple modifications. Two different symbols are used to indicate the starting point of the text contained in manuscript BAD-13-1-0232, with one of them appearing twice (a three-sign symbol). In BAD-13-1-2079 there is one sign. BAD-13-1-0312 contains three signs, one of which appears twice (a four-sign conventional symbol). The symbol used to demonstrate the end of the text in manuscript BAD-13-1-0232 is made of four signs, with one of them appearing twice (a five-sign symbol). In BAD-13-1-2079 three signs are used, one of which appears twice (a four-sign symbol). Finally, in BAD-13-1-0312 four signs are used in which one of these appears twice and another two of are inscribed three times each (a nine-sign conventional symbol). This demonstrates that the writers of these manuscripts had their own concepts when applying symbols to their works. In other words, the master manuscripts from which they copied might not have contained any conventional symbols, or even if they did, their forms were changed during the copying process. The writers of these manuscripts operated in a similar manner as the present day insofar as we usually start our notes with a hyphen, dot or star according to our preferences.

### 3.2 Modern style

Some manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode appear to have been influenced by modern styles of writing. In other words, numerous texts written on palm-leaf and paper contain various types of punctuation marks and are written in form similar to that of present-day techniques such as a comma, question mark and parenthesis amongst others. This indicates that some scribes had access to various types of modern publications and

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<sup>107</sup> *Namotassatthu* is a Pali word used as an exclamation of adoration at the beginning of a book. It seems that this word stands for *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*. For more details about the meaning of these words, see Davids and Stede 1925, p. 388.

considered modern writing styles – descriptive, persuasive and narrative writings amongst others – more convenient for read. Furthermore, they felt the formats/forms of such texts fascinating, so they chose to use similar techniques for their own manuscript-writing. This should also be recognized as an important turning point vis-à-vis the writing and copying of manuscripts within the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang.

#### a) Symbol and space

According to the date of writing or donation which were recorded in the colophons of some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, symbols and spaces applied in writing manuscripts might have began before the twentieth century. It seems that the Buddhist scholars in Luang Prabang who could read and write scripts on palm leaves might have learned that the traditional way of writing on palm leaves confused some readers because of the way the words were separated (as discussed in the examples above). In order to alleviate this, they used symbols to instruct readers which characters to combine.

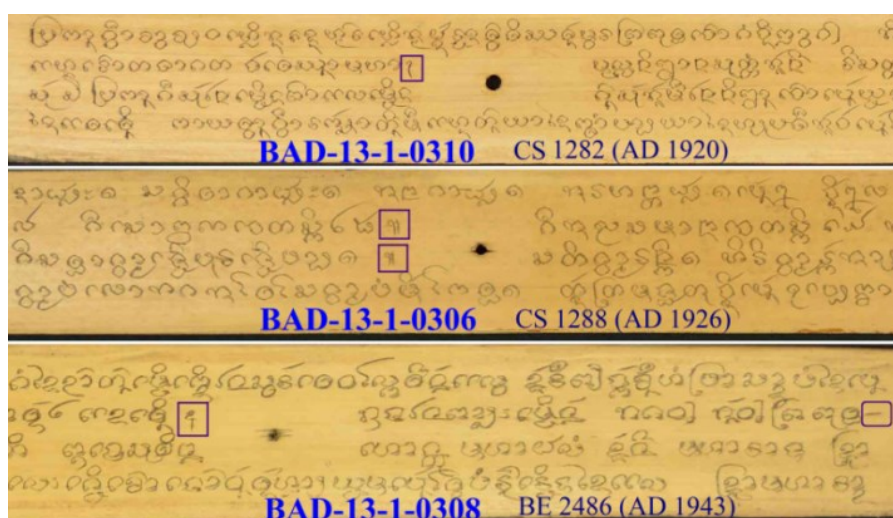
The texts of some manuscripts in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan do not appear to have been written in *linea continua* as there are many spaces between short sections (see Figure 5.10 below). Furthermore, spaces that are not large enough to write words in are the places (in rectangles) indicating that expected words to be written in the places comprised many characters – all of characters cannot be written in the spaces. In addition, a punctuation mark (that is, a dash in a rounded rectangle) was applied in writing a polysyllabic word in manuscript BAD-13-1-0308 (see the same figure). For example, the compound word “ພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າ” (the Buddha), made by the combination of two words derived from Pali, *vara* (excellent, splendid, best, noble)<sup>108</sup> and *Buddha*, and the Lao word *chao* ເຈົ້າ, was written at the end of the second line. Only however, the space for writing this word is suitable for “ພະພຸດທະ” and one character, so the person who wrote this text applied a dash to show the separation of this word (ພະພຸດທະ-).

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<sup>108</sup> For more detail about the meaning of *vara*, please see Davids and Stede 1925 p. 667. The word *vara* became the Lao word by contracting “*vara*” yields “*vra*” and replacing the initial consonant /v/ with consonant /ph/ – from this comes a new word “*phra*”. Present-day Lao orthography does not recognize a cluster /r/ in this word. Therefore, the word remains in its shape as *pha-wɛ*.



Figure 5.10: Symbols used to indicate the places for characters



The scribes of these manuscripts might have learned from modern publications how to use such marks or symbols. Yet, since there was no agreement as to which symbols should be used for such tasks of manuscript-making, there are variety of symbols that appear in different manuscripts which share the same function. The shape of the symbol used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0310 is similar to the shape of the Lao consonant /၅/, but its body bends to the front and its tail points to the back. The one used in BAD-13-1-0306 is similar to the vowel /၇/ in Lao, but a bit longer than /၇/ and followed by a vertical line. Finally, the symbol used in BAD-13-1-0308 is similar to the Lao consonant /၉/, but a bit longer and without a loop. This indicates that the scribes of these manuscripts learned how to use punctuation from different sources. However, they had the same purpose: to render the texts easier to read and comprehend.

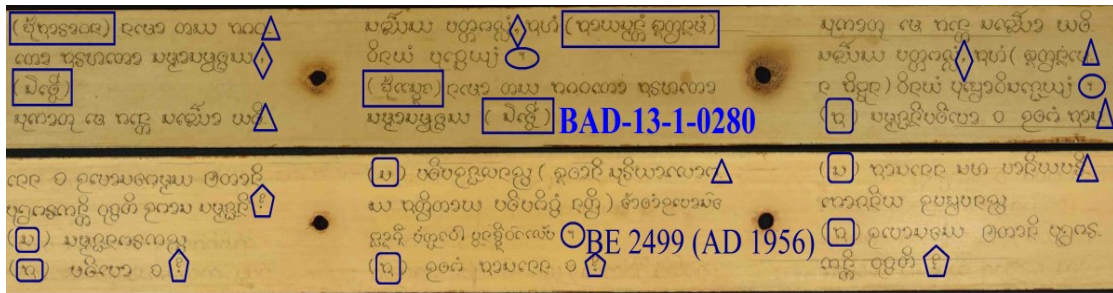
#### b) Columns

As noted above, texts were consistently written according to the tradition, but some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were written in columns. Manuscript BAD-13-1-0280, entitled *Phikkhu patimok* (ဖိနကုပာဏိဝဂ္ဂ) and written in BE 2499 (AD 1956), is examined below. This manuscript contains two texts, a set of regulations governing the daily activities monks and instructions for ordination.<sup>109</sup> Only the first text was written in column form. Not only is it written in columns, but question marks, parentheses, symbols marking the end of a sentence, and abbreviations appear in the text as well.

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<sup>109</sup> For more details about the content of this manuscript, please see Chapter 3.

Figure 5.11: An example of text written in three columns



An examination of Figure 5.11 reveals that five types of punctuation and two abbreviations – parentheses (in rectangles), hyphens (in triangles), commas (in diamonds), a symbol marking the end of a sentence (in ovals), question marks (in pentagons) and abbreviations (in rounded rectangles) – were applied. It seems that Sathu Phò Phan Phothipannyo of Vat Pa Siao (ສາທຸພັນ ໂພທິປັນໂຍ ວັດປ່າສັງໄວ), the monk who wrote this text, had experience reading various modern publications in his lifetime and, thus, adopted their stylistic techniques. He may have thought that texts with punctuation were easier to read and, therefore, applied these to his works. As it turns out, however, palm-leaf manuscripts are actually very suitable for writing in columns, as the text can be written in three columns on long palm leaves, whereas two columns are sufficient for the short ones.

c) Language expressions

According to traditional approaches to writing in Laos, manuscripts include introductory texts and concluding remarks. Religious texts usually begin with Pali words and a connecting word in Pali, *sādhavo*, and its equivalent meaning in Lao, *dula sappulisa thanglai* ດູລາສັບປຸລິສະທັງຫຼາຍ (see also Chapter 3). *Sādhavo* and its Lao equivalent, which appears between Pali words and the main text, provide readers and listeners with information reading the starting point of the text or story. Religious texts also end with one of two Pali words, *nitthitam* or *nitthitā*, and its equivalent in Lao, *kò sadet bòlabuan khuan thao ni kòn lae* ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ (see Chapter 3). Some texts end with certain Lao expressions, such as *kò laeo lae / kò laeo thao ni lae / kò laeo thao ni kòn lae* ກໍແລ້ວແລ/ ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່ານີ້ແລ/ກໍແລ້ວເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ, which signals the completion of a work or story. Such expressions usually end with the final particles, *lae/kòn lae* ແລ/ກ່ອນແລ. This indicates that some Lao Buddhist scholars established a way of writing introductory and concluding remarks for religious texts and that this technique was passed on from one generation to the next. Not only was this passed on, however, it was also developed and applied to the writing of manuscripts as well. In addition, a text without an introductory and concluding remark seems to be an incomplete text to readers and listeners.

Some of the manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were written by a scribe applying modern expressions. This means that some manuscripts contain texts which are more developed and up-to-date with regard to the expressions they employ. Therefore, manuscripts in this collection consist of two types of versions (traditionally-compiled and new-fashioned versions). The differences between the two types can clearly be seen in the introductory texts and concluding remarks. *Anisong* texts are a good example to illustrate this matter (see details on *Anisong* texts in Chapter 3). Here, the concluding remarks of an *Anisong* text pertaining to the merit gained by building a sand stupa – *Sòng Pha That Sai* (BAD-13-1-0220), written in 1924, as well as *Sòng Pha Chetiya Sai* (BAD-13-1-0208), written in 1944 are examined.

The text of BAD-13-1-0220 ends with the Pali word *nitthitam* and is followed by the Lao expression: ກໍສະເດັດບໍລະບວນຄວນເທົ່ານີ້ກ່ອນແລ (the translation of Lao text reads “completely finished”).

The text of BAD-13-1-0208 ends with the Pali word *evam* and is followed by the Lao expression: ກໍມີດ້ວຍປະການສັ້ນນີ້ (the latter of which means “it is as has been explained”).

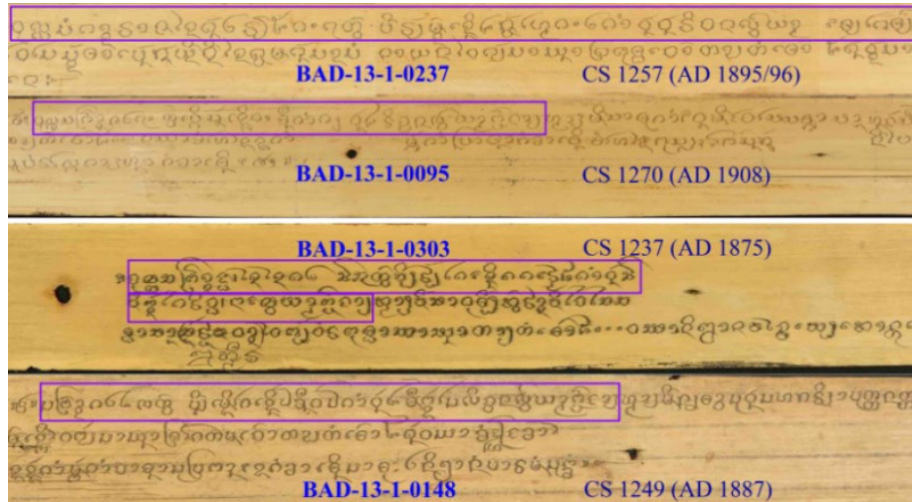
The concluding remarks of the above mentioned manuscripts are all in Pali, but they are somewhat different from one another. The first one, *nitthitam*, means “this here is the end of the text”, whereas the second one, *evam*, means “thus, the details of the text have been explained”. The person who wrote the second text informed his audiences that what he has just said are his explanations; that is to say, he wants to make sure that his readers understand the text. As for the one who wrote the first text, he might have related to what he had heard to readers or listeners, so that he might have focused on memory more than understanding. This ancient belief is supported by the Lao proverb “*an dai chü lai* ອ່ານໄດ້ຈື່ຫຼາຍ” literally meaning “[to] be able to read, (thereby) remember many things”. This means that any person who can read and remember a large number of texts or stories and has an ability to recount these to other people is recognized as a local scholar.

#### d) Dating system

As presented in Chapter 2, the dating system used in writing colophons is ordered from the largest unit of time (year) to the smallest (the time of day). This system comprises the following six parts which correspond to the lunar calendar: year in the era, cyclic year (animal year), month, fortnight, day and time. Some scribes insert the cyclic day or day of

the animal into this structure, so that the format changes to: year in the era, cyclic year, month, fortnight, day one (day of the week). day two (cyclic day), and time.

Figure 5.12: Traditional dating system



The dating system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0237 reads, “ຈຸນລະສັງກາດລາຊາໄດ້ ພັນ ໒ ຮ້ອຍ ໕໐໗ (໑໒໕໗) ຕົວ ປີຮັບມິດ ເດືອນ ໔ ອອກໃໝ່ ໑໐໒ (໑໒) ຄໍ່າ ວັນຈັນ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມແຖໃກ້ທ່ຽງ”; this means: “Chulasakarāt 1257, a *hap mot* year, in the fourth lunar month, on the twelfth day of the waxing moon, Monday,<sup>110</sup> completed at a time between 9 and 10:30 am, which corresponds to AD 1896, the twenty-fifth of February, Tuesday.” The system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0095 reads, “ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໗໐ ຕົວ [ປີ]ເປີກສັນ ເດືອນ ໑໐ ຂຶ້ນຄໍ່າ ໑ ວັນ ໔ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມກອງາຍ”, meaning, “Chulasakarāt 1270, a *poek san* year, in the tenth lunar month, the first day of the waxing moon, the fourth day of the week<sup>111</sup> (Wednesday), completed at a time between 7 and 9:30 am, which corresponds to AD 1908, the twenty-seventh of August, Thursday.” The system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0303 reads, “ຈຸນລະສັງກາດໄດ້ ໑໒໓໗ ຕົວ ປີຮັບໄຄ້ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ແຮມ ໔ ຄໍ່າ ວັນ ໓ ມື້ກັດໄຄ້ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມກອງາຍ”, which means “Chulasakarāt 1237, a *hap khai* year, the eleventh lunar month, the fifth day of the

<sup>110</sup> There appears to be a mistake in the dating system of this manuscript. If the fortnight is correct, then the day of the week should be Tuesday, not Monday. Conversely, if the day of the week is correct, then the fortnight should be the eleventh day of the waxing moon, not the twelfth day.

<sup>111</sup> There appears to be a mistake in the dating system of this manuscript. If the fortnight is correct, the day of the week should be the fifth day (Thursday), not the fourth one (Wednesday). If the day of the week is correct, the fortnight should be the fourteenth day of the waning moon, the ninth lunar month – not the first day of the waxing moon, the tenth lunar month.

waning moon, the third day of the week<sup>112</sup> (Tuesday), a *kat khai* day, completed at a time between 7 and 9:30 am, which corresponds to AD 1875, the twentieth of October, Wednesday.” The system used in the manuscript BAD-13-1-0148 reads, “[ຈຸນລະ]ສັງກາດໄດ້ ໑໒໔໙ ຕົວ ປີເມັງໄດ້ ເດືອນ ໖ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໓ ຄ່ຳ ວັນ ໔ ມື້ກັດໃສ້ ລິດຈະນາແລ້ວຍາມກອງາຍ”, which means “Chulasakarat 1249, a *moeng khai* year, the sixth lunar month, the thirteenth day of the waxing moon, the fourth day of the week<sup>113</sup> (Wednesday), a *kat sai* day, completed at a time between 7 and 9:30 am, which corresponds to AD 1887, the fifth of May, Thursday.” The details of the dating systems of these manuscripts have been arranged in the table below:

Table 5.2: Six- and seven-part dating systems

		Six-part system		Seven-part system	
		BAD-13-1-0237	BAD-13-1-0095	BAD-13-1-0303	BAD-13-1-0148
Chulasakarat		1257	1270	1237	1249
Cyclic year		<i>hap mot</i>	<i>poek san</i>	<i>hap khai</i>	<i>moeng khai</i>
Month		4	10	11	6
Fortnight	Waxing	12	1		13
	Waning			5	
Day of the week		Monday	The fourth day (Wednesday)	The third day (Tuesday)	The fourth day (Wednesday)
Cyclic day		–	–	<i>kat khai</i>	<i>kat sai</i>
Time		<i>thae kai thiang</i> (9:00–10:30)	<i>kòng ngai</i> (7:30–9:00)	<i>kòng ngai</i> (7:30–9:00)	<i>kòng ngai</i> (7:30–9:00)
Gregorian date		1896, 20 <sup>th</sup> February, Tuesday	1908, 27 <sup>th</sup> August, Thursday	1875, 20 <sup>th</sup> October, Wednesday	1887, 5 <sup>th</sup> May, Thursday

Further observations about the dating systems used in the colophons of these four manuscripts can be made based on Figure 5.12 and Table 5.2. First, the dating system that was used in the first two manuscripts comprises six parts, whereas the type used in the other two manuscripts consists of seven parts. As far as we can tell, the choice of dating system depended on the scribe’s preference. Second, the days of the week were recorded in both words and numbers, with the name of the day (in words) appearing in one of the four

<sup>112</sup> There seems to be a mistake in the dating system of this manuscript. If the fortnight is correct, the day of the week should be the fourth day (Wednesday), not the third one (Tuesday). Conversely, if the day of the week is correct, the fortnight should be the fourth day of the waning moon, not the fifth day.

<sup>113</sup> It is evident that there is a mistake in the date system of this manuscript. If the fortnight is correct, the day of the week should be the fifth day (Thursday), not the fourth one (Wednesday). If the day of the week is correct, the fortnight should be the twelfth day of the waning moon, not the thirteenth day.

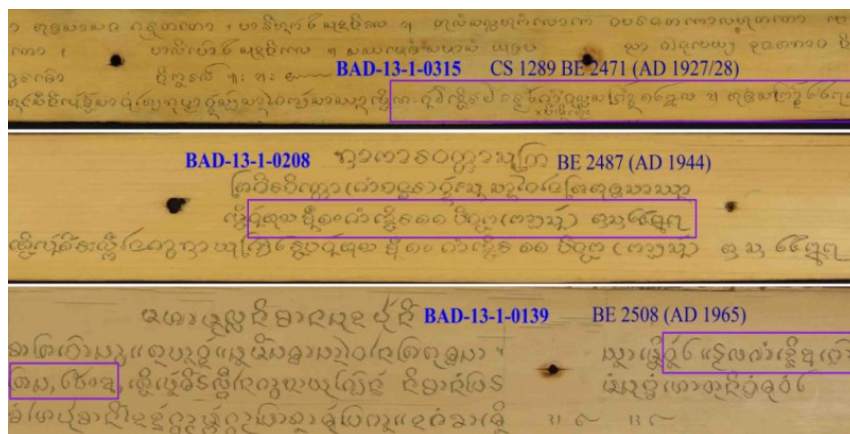


manuscripts (BAD-13-1-0237). This might reflect that in ancient times Lao scholars, especially astrologists, commonly told the days of the week in numbers. Third, in all four manuscripts, after converting the dates into the Gregorian calendar, the day of the week in each manuscript is one day before the corresponding date in the Gregorian calendar.

After western culture was introduced into Laos in the late nineteenth century, the way of life of Lao people changed. Some people had the opportunity to study various subjects and learn about modern technology. In consequence, they became local scholars and some of them might have even been appointed as administrators. It seems that every administrative unit was provided with various printed materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and other documents. Some of these printed materials appear to have been delivered to villages and monasteries as well. Interestingly, although perhaps not that surprisingly, the dating system, format and layout applied in the production of such printed materials are completely different from those used in producing manuscripts. Some scribes with access to newly delivered materials might have considered the possibility of applying some features of these materials in their manuscript works.

Undoubtedly, the utilization of formats and layouts used in modern publications when creating manuscripts directly indicates that manuscript-writing was influenced by modern publishing techniques. The influence seems to have first become apparent within circles of scholars and scribes with the aim of making their works more accessible to a wider audience. Some readers and users might have no notice on the changing of the techniques, they seemed to be familiar with and adopt the applying of the techniques.

Figure 5.13: Newly-changed dating system



Compared to the dating system used in manuscripts before the introduction of Western culture to Laos, this figure shows that the dating system used in the three manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0315, BAD-13-1-0208, and BAD-13-1-0139 – changes quite

noticeably, especially in regard to word order. The dating system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0315 reads, “ນະວັນ ໖ ເດືອນ ໖ ແຮມ ໕ ຄ່ຳ ມື້ເມິງເໝົ້າ ຈຸນລະສັງກາດ ໑໒໘໙ ພຸດທະສັງກາດ ໒໔໗໑”, or, “On the sixth day of the week (Friday), the sixth lunar month, the fifth day of the waning moon, a *moeng mao* day, Chulasakarāt 1289, BE 2471”; this corresponds to AD 1927, the twentieth of May, Friday. The dating system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0208 reads, “ວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໑໐ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໑໑ ປົວອກ (ກາບສັນ) ພ.ສ. ໒໔໘໗”, meaning, “Wednesday, the tenth day of the waxing moon, the eleventh lunar month, the Year of the Monkey (*kap san*), BE 2487”, or AD 1944, the twenty-seventh of September, Wednesday. The dating system used in manuscript BAD-13-1-0319 reads, “ວັນ ໒ ແຮມ ໙ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໘ ເກົ້າ ພ.ສ. ໒໕໐໘”, which translates to, “The second day of the week (Monday), the ninth day of the waning moon,<sup>114</sup> the first eighth lunar month, BE 2508”, and corresponds to AD 1965, the twenty-second of July, Thursday. The details of these dating systems appear in the table below:

Table 5.3: Newly ordered dating systems

		BAD-13-1-0315	BAD-13-1-0208	BAD-13-1-0139
Day of the week		Friday	Wednesday	The second day (Monday)
Month		6		
Fortnight	Waxing		10	
	Waning	5		9
Month			11	8
Cyclic day		<i>moeng mao</i>	–	–
Cyclic Year		–	<i>pi vòk (kap san)</i> (the Year of the Monkey)	–
Era		CS 1289, BE 2471	BE 2487	BE 2508
Gregorian date		1927, 20 <sup>th</sup> May, Friday	1944, 27 <sup>th</sup> September, Wednesday	Unable to be converted

When compared with Figure 5.12 and Table 5.2, Figure 5.13 and Table 5.3 show that the order of the dating systems used in manuscripts BAD-13-1-0315, BAD-13-1-0208, and BAD-13-1-0139 are different from manuscripts produced earlier. Parts of the dating system used in these manuscripts are arranged from the smallest unit (day) to the largest one (era); it is the reverse format of that used in former times, as shown in Table 5.2.

<sup>114</sup> Again, there appears to be a mistake in the dating system of this manuscript. If the fortnight is correct, the day of the week should be the fifth day, not the second one. If the day of the week is correct, then the fortnight should be the sixth day of the waning moon, not the ninth day.

Through Table 5.3, we can see that the order of the dating system using in BAD-13-1-0315 differs from those used in BAD-13-1-0208 and BAD-13-1-0139. In BAD-13-1-0315, “Month” is in front of “Fortnight”, whereas it follows “Fortnight” in the two remaining manuscripts.

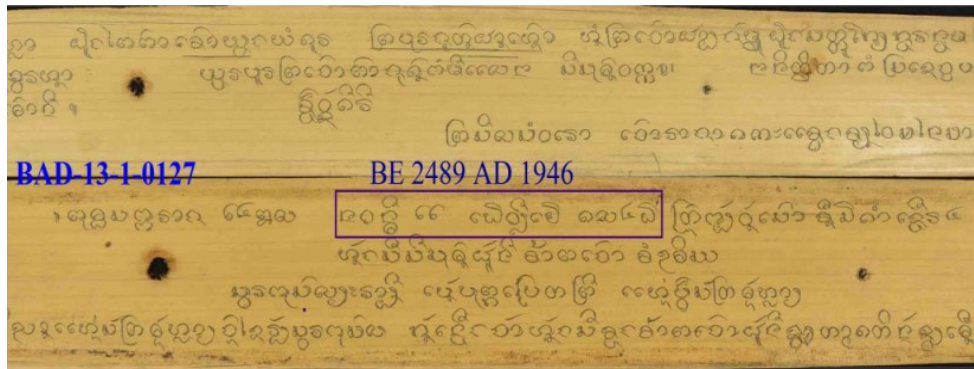
Table 5.3 further exhibits a number of the components which form the dating system used in these manuscripts. The scribes who wrote BAD-13-1-0315 and BAD-13-1-0208 applied a five-part dating system in their works, whereas the person who wrote BAD-13-1-0139 applied a four-part dating system. The dating system used in BAD-13-1-0139 is similar to the present-day dating system used for religious ceremonies, which is usually ordered: day of the week, fortnight, lunar month, BE. Additionally, the order of the dating system used in these three manuscripts differs from those used in the earlier four manuscripts (Figure 5.12) and one part – the time of day – is missing from the dating system of all of the manuscripts in Figure 5.13. This indicates that the scribes who wrote the dates on the three newer manuscripts may have been less interested in the time of day due to a waning interest in practices of astrology.

In practice, a person who completes his/her work or gives other people presents needs to refer to the times of the day. A scribe who wrote a manuscript might have felt the same way, as he had to work with patience, usually needing much time and many steps to complete his tasks, especially if it was a long text written on palm leaves with a stylus. Whenever he finished such a challenging work, he was proud of his ability to overcome all of the difficulties and challenges he faced while producing the manuscript. Therefore, he noted the time of the day, which sometimes reflects the local people’s daily activities, to mark his wonderful success.

Not only has the order of components of the traditional dating system been changed, but the names of the components might also have been replaced with words derived from Western languages. We found one colophon of a palm-leaf manuscript (BAD-13-1-0127) written in AD 1946 that contained the name of a month written in French using Lao characters, whereas other information in the colophon was written in Tham-Lao script. The dating system of this manuscript reads, “BE 2489, on the twenty-second of “Février”, AD 1946, corresponding to Saturday, the third day of the waxing moon, the fourth lunar month” (ພຸດທະສັກກະຫຼາດ ໒໔໘໙ ນະວັນທີ ໒໒ ເຟວຣີເຢ ໑໙໔໖ ຕົງກັບວັນເສົາ ຂຶ້ນ ໓ ຄໍ່າ ເດືອນ ໔). The dating system of this manuscript follows that which appears in modern printed materials thus ordered: date – month – year (three-part system). In the US, however, dates are ordered month, day, year.



Figure 5.14: The month of February written in French



This manuscript was written by a senior monk, Sathu Nyai Khamfan (Pha Silasangvaro),<sup>115</sup> who carried the position of Chao Lasakhana Khwaeng (ເຈົ້າລາຊາຄະນະ ແຂວງ), a high ecclesiastical rank in the Sangha hierarchy, when he wrote this manuscript. This suggests that the manuscripts he wrote – including the format, layout, and expressions he employed – were likely used as an example by other monks and novices. Another aspect worth discussing is the presence of dates recorded according to the Christian Era in palm-leaf manuscripts. As mentioned in Chapter 2, most manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan are dated in the Minor Era or Buddhist Era. Here, the appearance of the Common Era in a palm-leaf manuscript illustrates another way of dating manuscripts.

With regard to the manuscripts kept in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, the Common Era was first applied in dating a manuscript in AD 1946 – a year in which a number of important historical events took place in Lao. One of the events was a temporary arrangement between the French and Lao (Franco-Lao *modus vivendi*) which established the unity of the Kingdom of Laos, signed on August 27, 1946 (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: xxxiii). The first palm-leaf manuscript (BAD-13-1-0127) dated in the Common Era was written on February 22, 1946 – six months before the arrangement was signed.

Apart from this manuscript, two palm-leaf manuscripts – BAD-13-1-0026 and BAD-13-1-0156 – are also dated in the Common Era. The former is dated AD 1978 and the latter is dated in both AD 1988 and BE 2530. The co-existence of the Buddhist and Common Eras in these manuscripts is indicative of the emergence of a new way of dating works in

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<sup>115</sup> Sathu Nyai Khamfan (1901–1987) was one of the senior monks in Luang Prabang who contributed to the construction and renovation of monasteries and Buddhist education. During his lifetime he was nominated to high-up ecclesiastical ranks in the religious hierarchy. The highest rank he carried was Somdet Pha Luk Keo (ສົມເດັດພະລູກແກ້ວ), which was the second highest rank in the hierarchy. For more details about Sathu Nyai Khamfan, see Pha One Keo and Khamvone 2011, pp. 67–69.

Laos. Before the influence of Western culture, both secular and religious literary works used the same eras, Minor and Buddhist. With the spread of Western cultural norms in Laos, all printed material such as official documents, books and magazines were dated in the Common Era, whereas manuscripts were still dated according to tradition. Later, some people might not have known or understood the Minor and Buddhist eras, thus Buddhist scholars used the Common Era in their works in order to help people unfamiliar with the traditional eras to understand dates.

As discussed in Chapter 2, three kinds of paper – mulberry, *khòì* and modern industrially-produced paper – were used as writing supports for manuscript production. This section is about manuscripts produced on modern paper. The size of most of modern paper manuscripts is similar to the size of palm-leaf manuscripts (see the sizes of this manuscript in table 2.2 in chapter 2), but they were made in leporello or concertina format. The texts were written in the Tham-Lao script, and the Minor Era does not appear in these manuscripts. The dating system that was used in these manuscripts is the same as that used in printed materials such as books, magazines, papers, and documents. It seems that the scribe of these manuscripts wanted to provide his readers with a common dating system, that is to say, the system that familiar to everyone from the time that they begin their primary education.

The person who wrote these manuscripts was a former monk named Thit<sup>116</sup> Niao Manivong (ທິດ ຫຼວງ ມະນີວົງ). He might have thought that the Buddhist and Common Eras were more familiar to the Lao people than the Minor Era, so he utilised these eras in his works. The Buddhist and Common Eras appear alongside one another. Specifically, the former is required whenever traditional festivals and ceremonies are celebrated, whereas the latter is used to date official documents. The scribe was probably well aware of how the lunar and solar calendars were used together, so it makes sense why the two dating systems appear side-by-side in this manuscript.

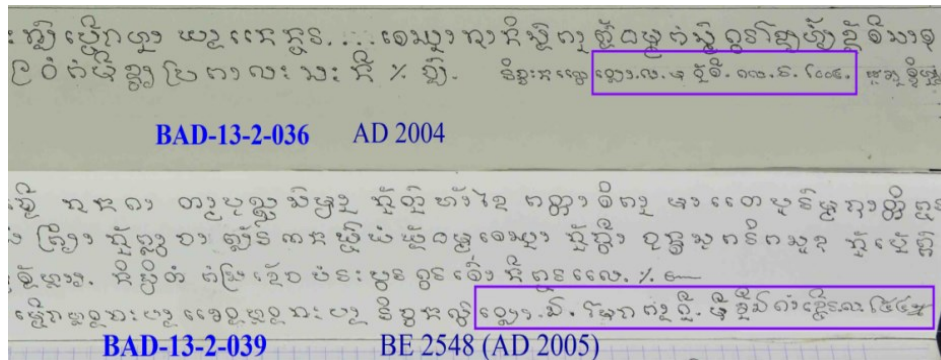
Thit Niao Manivong (Thit Niao) was a Buddhist scholar in Luang Prabang who followed the newly introduced orthographic system of the Tham-Lao script and the new way of writing manuscripts – both the system and the way might have been put into place

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<sup>116</sup> According to tradition, monks and novice can leave their monasteries at any time, in essence, whenever they feel that they cannot live as monastic members any longer. A former novice has the prefix of *siang* (ຂຽງ) added to his name, whereas a former monk has two words as titles of respect, *thit* (ທິດ) or *chan* (ຈານ), depending on his status when he was a monk. The word *thit* is added to the name of a former monk who was un-anointed (ບໍ່ໄດ້ທິດ) and Chan for the one who received at least one anointment ceremony (Preecha 1989: 240, 287, 408; Sila 2549: 92, 144, 199–200; Thòngkham 2003: 288). Therefore, men with the word Siang, Thit or Chan as a prefix in front of their names are considered to be local scholars.

by Sathu Nyai Khamchan. However, Thit Niao did not use two dating systems in the same manuscript, whereas some manuscripts initiated by Sathu Nyai Khamchan regularly contain two dating systems, the Buddhist and Minor Eras. Therefore, Thit Niao had his own way of dating manuscripts.

Figure 5.15: The Common Era mentioned in manuscripts



The dating system of manuscript BAD-13-2-036 reads, “at 9 [am], 19/3/2004” (ເວລາ ໙ ໂມງ ວັນທີ ໑໙.໓.໒໐໐໔). It seems that the dating system of this manuscript was developed from the dating system in printed materials – by adding “time” to the structure as the first part: time – date – month (solar) – year (Common Era), according to the solar calendar. The dating system in manuscript BAD-13-2-039 reads, “at 3 am, the third day of the waxing moon, in the ninth lunar month, [BE] 2548” (ເວລາ ໓ ໂມງກາງຄືນ, ມື້ຂຶ້ນ ໓ ຄໍ້າ, ເດືອນ ໙, ໒໕໔໘). This date corresponds to AD 2005, the eighth of August, a Monday. Unlike the dating system of BAD-13-036, the dating system of BAD-13-2-039 follows the lunar calendar, in effect: time – fortnight – month (lunar) – year (BE). Only the first part (time) is the same as the dating system of BAD-13-2-036.

#### 4. Tools

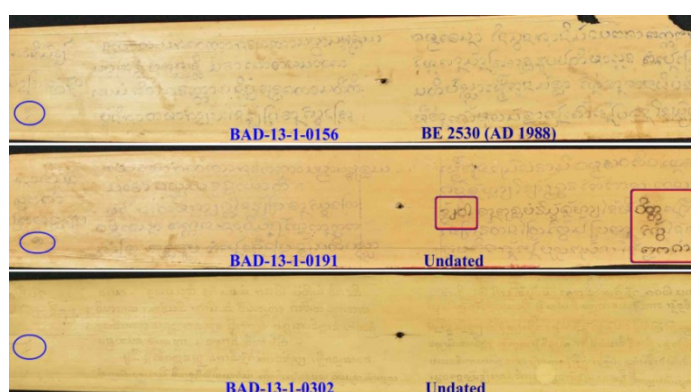
The tool necessary for writing on palm-leaf is a stylus. However, a fascicle of a manuscript is not finished once the stylus has been used to incise the text; after writing, all the incisions still need to be darkened. Both writing and darkening a palm-leaf manuscript require considerable time and effort. This means that the more a person inscribes scripts on palm leaves, the better he is at making the incisions visible.

However, some of the manuscripts found in Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s abode were not written with a stylus, but rather with various ballpoint pens, which in general were used much more frequently for making corrections than for writing or copying new works.

#### 4.1 A ballpoint pen, pen, pencil and chalk

Some tools cannot be used to write on every kind of writing support; for instance, it is not possible to write on palm-leaves with chalk. Ballpoint pens, pens, pencils and chalk are all suitable for writing on paper, so it is unsurprising that all of the paper manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were written with these tools. However, there are three palm-leaf manuscripts in the collection – BAD-13-1-0156, BAD-13-1-0191 and BAD-13-1-0302 – which were written with a ballpoint pen. These manuscripts all contain *Anisong* texts. The first one is *Anisong sang pha phuttha hup* (“The benefit derived from (merit of) building a Buddha statue”), dated 1988; second, *Anisong phòk kham pha phuttha hup* (“The benefit derived from sticking gold leaves onto a Buddha statue”), undated; and the last, *Anisong kò chedi sai* (“The benefit derived from building a sand stupa”), undated.

Figure 5.16: The first page of three different manuscripts written with a ballpoint pen



These manuscripts are only partly legible because the ink faded; the last manuscript, especially, is barely legible. A ballpoint pen or normal pen may be used to write easily onto a palm leaf. However, the ink of the ballpoint pen and pen can easily be rubbed out because the leaf cannot absorb any liquid, unless the surface of the leaf is incised. This is similar to what Agrawal (1982:85) describes: “For writing with ink or painting a pen or brush was used. The writing was done as on paper. In this case the ink or the paint, unlike in paper, remains on the surface of the leaf because the palm-leaf is less absorbent than the paper.” The ink of a pen, then, fades away quickly from the surface of the leaves; however, pens were perhaps more easily accessible than normal stylus materials and, furthermore, available in multiple colours. This may have convinced the scribe to use a ballpoint pen in making short *Anisong* manuscripts. As *Anisong* texts are quite brief, any of which losing its legibility can be recopied quickly.

Interestingly, these manuscripts were written in the same format and layout. In essence, they were written in three columns, but with different numbers of lines on each

page: BAD-13-1-0156 was written with four lines on each page; BAD-13-1-0191 has five lines; and BAD-13-1-0302 is marked by six. It seems that the differences depended on the size of both the writing support and the scribe's handwriting. The size of palm leaves used as writing support for BAD-13-1-0156 is 52.2 x 4.7 centimetres, for BAD-13-1-0191 it is 52.5 x 5 centimetres, and for BAD-13-1-0302 it is 52.4 x 5 centimetres. The sizes of the scribes' handwritings in BAD-13-1-0156 and BAD-13-1-0191 are almost the same, whereas the size of the script written in BAD-13-1-0302 is smaller than that found in BAD-13-1-0156 and BAD-13-1-0191.

The introductory texts and concluding remarks of these manuscripts are classified as new-fashioned *Anisong* manuscripts because of their compilation (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, cardinal numbers – located within ovals in Figure 5.16 – were applied as pagination to the writing material (writing support) of these manuscripts and written on the left-hand margins of the first page (recto) of each folio (leaf), alongside the traditional pagination written on the second page (verso) of the same margin. Roman numerals were also used to paginate the folios of BAD-13-1-0302, whereas Lao numbers were used in BAD-13-1-0156 and BAD-13-1-0191.

A passage following the main text of BAD-13-1-0156 reads: “On the twenty-seventh day of January, AD 1988, Wednesday, the ninth waning day of the third lunar month, a *moeng mao* year, BE 2530, Pha Khamchan Virachitta Thera, Vat Saen Sukharam” (ວັນທີ ໒໗ ມັງກອນ ໑໙໘໘ ວັນພຸດ ຂຶ້ນ ໙ ຄ່ຳ ເດືອນ ໓ ປີ ເມັງເໝົ້າ ພ.ສ. ໒໕໓໐ ພະຄຳຈັນ ວິລະຈິດຕະເຖລະ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ). In this passage, the scribe of this manuscript, probably Sathu Nyai Khamchan, applied both Buddhist and Common Eras to date it. This demonstrates that a new system had been introduced in dating manuscripts. The system contains two parts forming the structure: “(day of the month – month – Common Era) – (day of the week – fortnight – lunar month – sexagesimal year (the Year of the Animal) – BE).” Since the day of the week can be one element of both parts – it appears between the two dating systems (solar and lunar calendars). As a result, the structure of the dating system of this manuscript can be rearranged as: “day of the month – month – Common Era – **day of the week** – fortnight – lunar month – cyclic year (the Year of the Animal) – BE”.

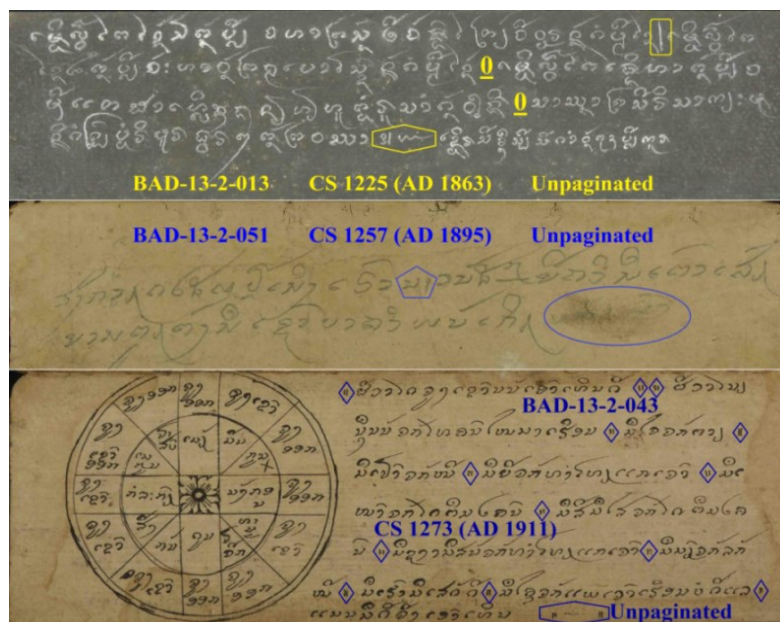
If we consider the shapes of the letters or handwriting used in these manuscripts, we can divine that these were written by the same scribe, even though BAD-13-1-0191 and BAD-13-1-0302 contain no information pertaining to the identity of their scribes or time of writing. Furthermore, all of these manuscripts were written according to the new orthography for Tham-Lao script; for instance, tone marks were applied. Through Figure 5.16, we can clearly see that BAD-13-1-191 contains some corrections, which are located within rounded rectangles. The corrections were made because the ink had begun to fade.

This manuscript seems to have frequently been checked and used. In addition, traces of ink from a ballpoint pen are still visible on the palm leaves.

Some of the paper manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were written with white chalk, pencils and pens. These manuscripts were made in a leporello format, but their sizes differ from one another (Chapter 2, Table 2.2). The folios (sheets) of the manuscripts written with chalk are black in colour, whereas those written with a pencil or a pen are of a natural colour. There is no evidence currently available that denote the exact time that these tools were first used to write manuscripts, but it does not seem to pre-date the presence of the first Europeans, Gerrit van Wuysthoff, an agent of the Dutch East India Company and the Italian Jesuit missionary Giovanni-Maria Leria, in Vientiane between AD 1641 and 1642 (Stuart-Fox and Kooyman 1992: xxvii; Stuart-Fox 1997: 13). Together with their other necessities, van Wuysthoff and Father Leria might have brought with various writing materials and tools with them. This, in turn, might have influenced the manner in which literary works were written in the Kingdom of Lan Xang afterwards.

Chalk might not have initially been used to write on the pages of common books, but rather to write on smooth and hard surfaces. The ability to make the sheets of folded books suitable for writing with chalk shows how the Buddhist scholars in Luang Prabang, and in Laos as a whole, have developed their approaches to creating manuscripts and passed on this knowledge over time. In addition, some people who wrote on the above mentioned paper manuscripts might have known how to make folded books possessing many formats.

Figure 5.17: Paper manuscripts written with chalk, pencil and pen





None of paper manuscripts shown in Figure 5.17 have titles. The contents of the first manuscript, BAD-13-2-013, relates to a Buddhist chronicle; the second is a note on Ba Khamphan's birthday; and the last one deals with auspicious and inauspicious moments according to the twelve signs of the zodiacs detailing the redeeming of a person, an animal for the suffering he/she and it had been caused.

The manuscripts shown in Figure 5.17 – BAD-13-2-013, BAD-13-2-051, BAD-13-2-043 – were written not only by employing modern tools, but also by applying spaces and some symbols for marking the ends of sentences (depicted in rectangle, diamonds and marked by **0**) and paragraphs (located in hexagons). Unlike BAD-13-2-013 and BAD-13-2-043, BAD-13-2-051 contains no symbols but, rather, one word corresponding to “on” in English, “*na* ນະ” (visible within a pentagon), was used. This word does not seem to have been applied to manuscripts from the distant past. Furthermore, the person who wrote the note in BAD-13-2-051 applied modern techniques by writing the note in paragraph form. It seems that he also wrote some words after the note (in an oval), but he then rubbed them out. This means that after one note was completely finished, another note – although it is a short text – had to be written in a separate paragraph.

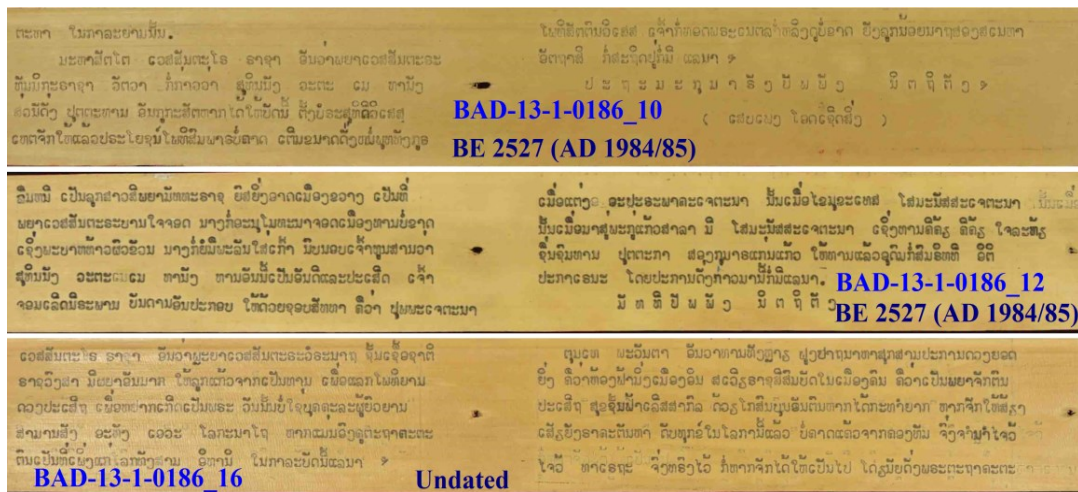
A diagram of the twelve signs of zodiacs (in words) with their predictions appears in BAD-13-2-043. However, only the first sentence on this page relates to the diagram. The sentence reads: “If you get [the word] ‘lead into’, then take it, it is good” (ຜົວໄດ້ ‘ຈູງເຂົ້າ’ ນັ້ນ ເອົາເທົ້ນດີ). This sentence serves as a concluding remark of the preceding text. Furthermore, the sentence is marked by the same symbol twice (in diamonds), which clearly indicates that the text is complete. The scribe who wrote the text, and used the symbol as such, might have aimed to remind readers to adjust their understanding of the text.

Using the same symbol twice in BAD-13-2-043 might mark the end of the sub-paragraph because the passage that follows also relates to the same topic as the preceding text. However, the predictions of the subsequent text follow the cyclic days, whereas those of the previous writings refer to the twelve signs of the zodiacs. Like the preceding text, the following text ends with a concluding remark reading: “If it is a ‘good [auspicious] day’ please take it.” (ແມ່ນ ‘ມີດີ’ ຈຶ່ງເອົາເທົ້ນ). Following this sentence, then, comes a group of symbols (depicted within a hexagon) signaling the end of the main paragraph.

## 4.2 A Typewriter

Twelve palm-leaf manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were not written with a stylus or pen but, rather, produced with a typewriter.<sup>117</sup> The palm leaves used as writing support for making these manuscripts do not appear to have been prepared according to the tradition. Instead, they were manufactured in a factory. In short, handmade palm leaves are less pliable, thus making it difficult to insert these into a typewriter. This rigidity, moreover, meant that it was easy for these leaves to become broken or damaged during the typing process. The leaves produced by modern machines, conversely, are more flexible and thus more suitable for use with a typewriter.

Figure 5.18: Sample of manuscripts produced with a typewriter



This manuscript contains the story of Prince Vessantara and is entitled *the mahā sat* (ເຫດມະຫາຊາດ). It was typed onto sixteen fascicles of palm leaves; this is the same number of fascicles as in the handwritten versions. One difference between the typed and written versions, however, is that the former was typed with three columns and five lines on each page, whereas the latter was written with continuum in each line from the left margin until the right margin, with four lines on each page. The handwritten text was more commonly inscribed in Tham-Lao, whereas the script employed in the typed version is modern Lao. This demonstrates that the Lao script can also be utilized for writing religious texts. The Buddhist scholars in Luang Prabang may have realized that each variant of the Dhamma

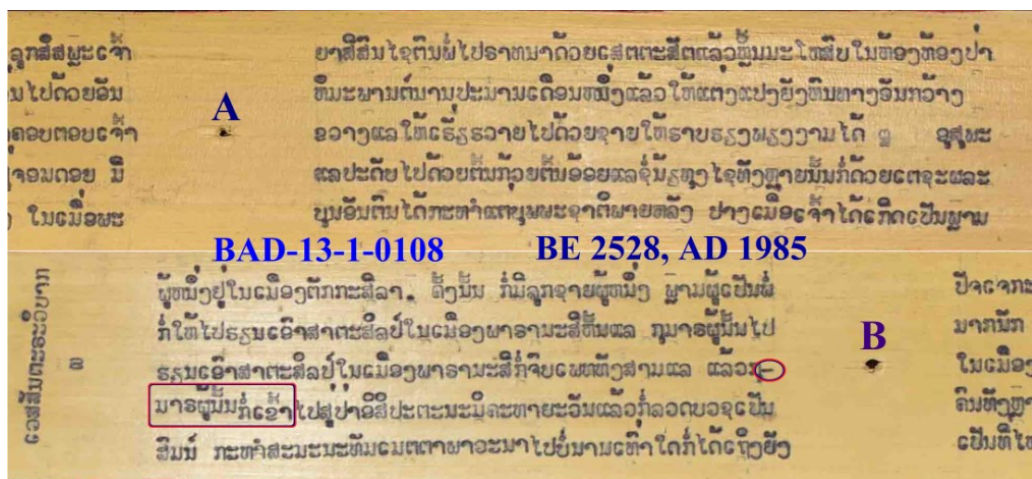
<sup>117</sup> For more details about the format and layout of the manuscripts written with a typewriter, see manuscripts BAD-13-1-0032, BAD-13-1-0107, BAD-13-1-0108, BAD-13-1-0109, BAD-13-1-0110, BAD-13-1-0111, BAD-13-1-0112, BAD-13-1-0186, BAD-13-1-0192, BAD-13-1-0206, BAD-13-1-0283, BAD-13-1-0289.



script is difficult to read for some monks and novices. Consequently, they provided such monks and novices with the texts written in Lao, thereby providing monks and novices with the opportunity to study the texts without having to learn a new script.

Based on some of the discoveries within the manuscripts of Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s collection, it is evident that Buddhist scholars in Luang Prabang, probably monks and novices, used a typewriter to produce manuscripts on both paper and palm leaves between 1960 and 1990. This work is challenging, and the typist must be very patient. The typist needs an assistant to help him while he is working by fixing the palm leaf in place. This is especially the case when typing the bottom line on each page, otherwise the line will not be straight. Applying such technology in an unorthodox manner such as this requires significant know-how. Here, the user must know how to insert a palm leaf into a typewriter and situate it just right so that the characters will appear correctly. An excerpt from manuscript BAD-13-1-0108 is a good example illustrating some of the problems that can occur.

Figure 5.19: A sample of disordered lines in typed manuscripts



This figure shows that the bottom line of the last column of the first page (A) and the last line of the first column of the second page (B) are not straight; they are shifted out of place. This clearly shows the importance of having a skilled assistant to make sure that the typeset is exactly in place. The level of effort put into such typing tasks can often be evaluated by examining the neatness of the final line on each page due to the difficulty of keeping everything lined up.

Figure 5.18 also shows how the dash (in the oval) was adopted and used to mark the separation of a two-syllable word, *kumam*<sup>118</sup> (ກຸມາມ). This matter is similar to what was discussed earlier in this chapter in the section Symbol and Space. In other words, the dash was required and used both in manuscripts that were inscribed with a stylus in Tham-Lao and those written with typewriters in the Lao script. This indicates that the scribes who used traditional tools, as well as the typists utilizing modern appliances, all had the same goal: to render their works more comprehensible to a wider audience. Some readers might have seen this symbol in books, magazines and papers, and some of them might have used it in their own writing.

Another matter to be highlighted here is the spacing of lines. One syllable and two words (marked within rounded rectangle), *man phu nan* ມານຜູ້ນັ້ນ, at the beginning of the fourth line of the first column of the second page, were typed with incorrect line spacing: in short, it is too close to the third line. Therefore, the words that were typed afterwards in the same line were put lower into the next line, thus reflecting the typist's skill in using the machine to craft his manuscripts.

### 4.3 Correction liquid

Another tool that comes into play when working with typewriters is correction liquid (Lao: *nam lüp khao* ນໍ້າລຶບຂາວ), a substance with which some of Sathu Nyai Khamchan's manuscripts have been treated. There are no details about the time this tool was first used in writing manuscripts, but the application of correction liquid in the production of paper manuscripts dates back to AD 1908 (BAD-13-2-042). This indicates that Lao scholars in Luang Prabang at that time found a successful way to develop their literary works. In effect, they were not only eager to copy manuscripts, but also to gain knowledge about the development of their works. Scribes who applied correction liquid to their works might have been scribes who frequently made mistakes and who sought a solution to such frustrating problems. As such, they may have observed that painting correction liquid over their mistakes was easier and more aesthetically pleasing than drawing a line through errant words or characters.

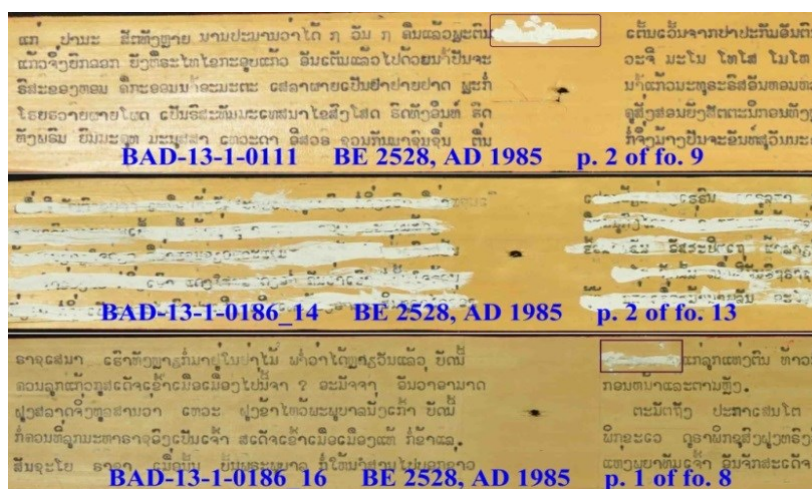
It seems that correction liquid was first produced to rectify typographical errors, but it was then also used to fix handwritten mistakes. However, the writing support or material

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<sup>118</sup> This word was derived from the Pali *kumāra* which comprises three syllables: *ku-mā-ra*. After it became a Lao word, the vowel *a* in the last syllable was omitted and the remaining consonant *r* became the final consonant in the syllable in front of it, *mā*. Therefore, the typist of BAD-13-1-0108 spelled this word according to its origin, *kumār* (ກຸມາຣ). Present Lao grammar, however, does not recognize *r* (ຣ) as a final consonant, so this word was written in two variant forms, *kumān* (ກຸມານ) and *kummān* (ກຸມມານ).

which is generally used for typing is paper. If a mistake is made while typing or writing, the liquid is required to paint over the mistake and a correction can be applied after the liquid is dry. But the usage of the liquid on palm leaves differs from that used on paper – no correction is written over the painted liquid. Therefore, the typed palm-leaf manuscripts which were kept in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan are in the same condition (Figure 5.20). This indicates that the typist of these manuscripts was concerned about the impropriety of typing corrections over the dried paint; the paint with corrections might also have eroded off the leaves due to various causes.

Figure 5.20: Correction liquid used in palm-leaf manuscripts



From Figure 5.20, it is reasonable to infer that some words in the first line in the first column of BAD-13-1-0111 (situated within in a rounded rectangle) were typed over the length of the line and erased with correction liquid. There was clearly no need to type any corrections on the painted point because the line needed to be the same length as the other lines in the same column. This indicates that the typist might have only known how to type with a typewriter, but not actually how to set one up. Unlike this manuscript, some words at the beginning of the first line in the second column of BAD-13-1-0186\_16 (located in a rectangle) were mistyped and they were also covered with correction liquid without inserting any corrected words. In practice, the painted point can be typed over once without changing the length of the line, but the scribe of this manuscript left this space empty. He might not have considered the possibility of re-typing over such a point, only using the liquid to indicate his errors.

Interestingly, all of words on the second page of the thirteenth folio of BAD-13-1-0186\_16 were mistyped and covered with correction liquid. This means the first page of the folio contains required text, whereas the second one is almost entirely illegible due to

the liquid. Nevertheless, the folio is still kept attached to other folios, combining them to create a fascicle of a typed palm-leaf manuscript. This indicates that typing on palm-leaf might have entailed much more effort than typing on paper of any kind, especially when completing bottom line. Therefore, the thirteenth folio of BAD-13-1-0186\_16 was not thrown away, even though only one page is useful. This also suggests that there were time constraints when producing a typed manuscript. This particular manuscript contains a very long text, Vessantara Jataka (“The story of Prince Vessantara”), so the number of errors present seems to suggest that there was a rush to have it completed within an expected timeframe.

The use of correction liquid in paper manuscripts is different from those used in palm-leaf manuscripts. Paper is convenient not only for writing and typing, but also for shaping and formatting. Paper can also absorb liquids easily, which is almost impossible for palm-leaf. These features seem to have been familiar to the scribes who applied correction liquid to their works. They used this tool in the same way that present-day writers do; in essence, by covering mistakes with correction liquid, sometimes over many lines, and writing the correct words in over the painted spots.

Figure 5.21: Correction liquid used in paper manuscripts

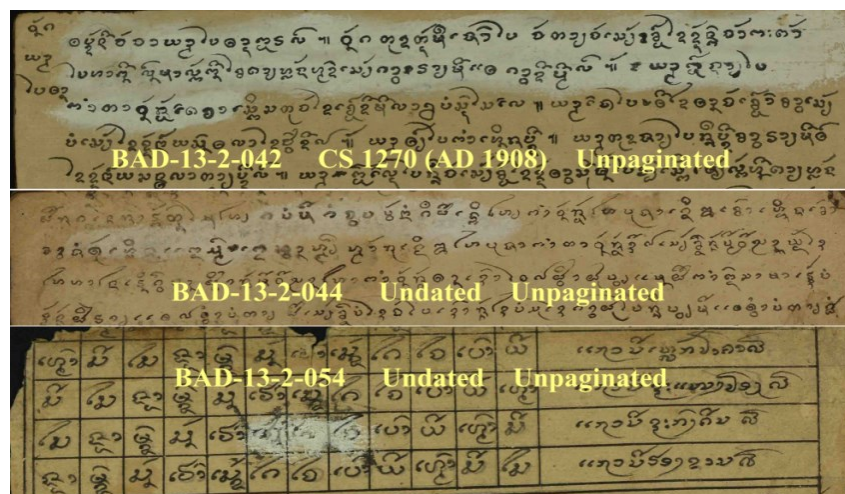


Figure 5.21 shows that many words in manuscript BAD-13-2-042, over two lines of text, were written over with correction liquid. Two other manuscripts – BAD-13-2-044 and BAD-13-2-054 – also have some whited out words as well. All of the scribes who applied this technique might have had experience in rendering their literary works more accessible for readers and users. In the case of BAD-13-2-042, for instance, it would be nonsense if a line was drawn through all of the miswritten words. By looking at such crossed-out words, readers and users might think that the scribes were inexperienced in writing, making their



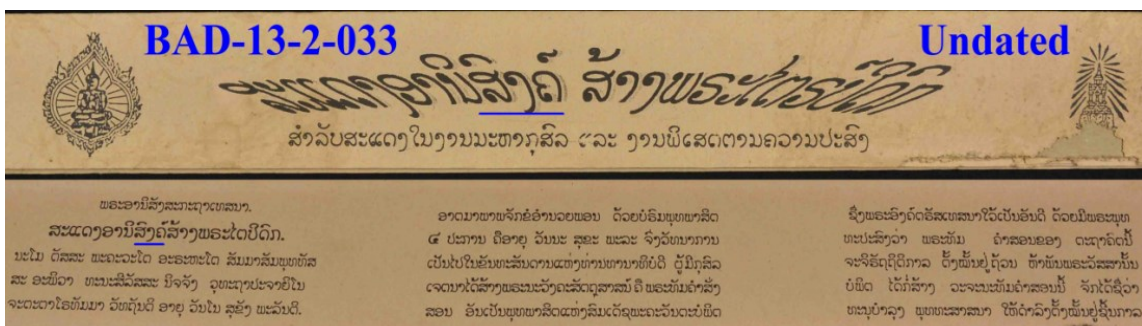
writings less appealing. Furthermore, this could mean cause some readers and users might to lose confidence in the works of that scribe.

Correction liquid has been popular since the mid-twentieth century onwards; however, manuscript BAD-13-2-042 is marked by correction liquid and dates back to 1908. This indicates that the correction liquid used in this manuscript may not be exactly the same as that used in the present. It seems that the correction liquid used in these paper manuscripts (Figure 5.19) was not very thick; in brief, it is quite runny and similar to white paint, especially when compared to those used in the palm-leaf manuscripts presented above (Figure 5.19). People who erased miswritten words in the paper manuscripts might have had experience using paint, so they just mixed white paint with liquid to erase their errors.

#### 4.4 Computers

With regard to writing support, language expressions and the tools applied, the *Anisong* manuscripts seem to have been produced and developed most consistently of all the manuscript categories in this study. Some titles of these manuscripts – such as the one on merit gained by building a bridge or pavilion, or by organizing a ceremony for one’s birthday – directly indicate socio-economic development. This means that as the society and economy developed, the use of modern techniques to make manuscripts became more frequent. One manuscript entitled *Sadaeng Anisong sang phra trai pidok* (“The explanation of the merit made by sponsoring [the copying of the] Tipitaka” – see Figure 5.22 below) appears to have been made using a computer. The title of this text was clearly designed and created using a computer programme, thus enabling the producer to achieve his ideal form. However, his production was likely to be a non-professionally printed work.

Figure 5.22: *Anisong* text created using a computer



It seems that this manuscript was typed on a computer, with many copies being made in order to respond to the demands of Buddhists who prefer to sponsor new, more up-to-date ways of copying Buddhist texts. However, the word *Anisong* (in Lao) orthographically indicates that the person who typed the text might have been confused with the presumed etymology of the term. He might not have been able to justify the term *song* (Pali: *saṅgha* “assembly of four or more monks”) which is part of the compound *pha song* (monks), and is phonetically identical with the syllable *song* in *Anisong*.

In Pali, the short vowel *a* does not appear as a special grapheme when it follows a consonant to form a syllable or word. In Lao, such a short vowel is not pronounced and the preceding consonant is silenced when the latter appears in word-final position. The word *ānisamsa* – ending with *sa* – thus has to be changed to *Anisong* when it becomes a Lao word. Nevertheless, some scribes write this word according to its etymology by keeping its last syllable – *sa*. Therefore, a mark is required and placed above it in writing – *Anisong* ອານິສົງສ໌ – indicating that the consonant is mute in this context. This word ends with *song* which sounds similar to that of the compound *pha song*. However, *song* here is derived from another Pali word, namely *saṅgha*, which should have been written *song* ສົງຄ໌, according to its etymological origin.

## 5. Conclusion

Most matters discussed in this chapter show that the manuscripts produced by applying modern machines also contain mistakes. Just as some scribes only knew how to write but knew little about the tools themselves or the texts to be copied, typists often made mistakes due to a lack of knowledge regarding typing equipment as well as the literature they were copying.

In traditional Lao manuscript culture, the people whose names appeared in the colophons were clearly mentioned as sponsors or donators, not as scribes. In other words, most scribes did not sign their work, which suggests that they were hired to do the copying instead for the sake of their own merit-making. They might have thought that the people who asked them to do this work should leave their names in the manuscripts instead. The nature of such work may have meant tight deadlines, which could also be a factor in explaining the high number of typographical errors present. This, along with inexperience, is likely what led to the high frequency of mistakes found within these manuscripts.

Sathu Nyai Khamchan might have been well aware of this matter. It seems he checked the manuscripts in his collection regularly and made corrections in a number of these using a ballpoint pen. Although he is popularly said to have had beautiful handwriting when writing with a styli in the Tham-Lao script on the palm-leaves, he did

not use a stylus for his corrections. Sathu Nyai Khamchan might have learnt that using a stylus for corrections was not a viable option because the incisions on the palm-leaf were not visible unless black oil was applied. He might have thought that since the ink of a ballpoint pen was immediately legible, the utilization of such a device was a more efficient way to make corrections. In brief, it seems that he was less concerned about the longevity of notes he made with ballpoint than with the speedy and extensive editing of his collection.

Modern tools such as pens and ballpoint pens were used not only for corrections, but they were also applied to add notes and passages to some manuscripts, so that the manuscripts have a new feature, according to the tools that were applied for writing the corrections and passages. Traditionally, a manuscript contains the original text and in some instances might also have a colophon. However, no notes or passages of any kind appear in these manuscripts, especially those made of palm leaves and written in any variant of the Dhamma script. Conversely, some palm-leaf manuscripts found in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan contain various notes and passages, and these are, even more interestingly, written in any variant of Dhamma script. This shows that manuscripts might not only contain certain texts, but also notes and passages written in blank spaces after the original copying process. This is very similar to some modern publications that contain a number of notes left by their owners and users.

Most palm-leaf and paper manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were produced according to traditional approaches to manuscript-making. Indeed, the palm leaves and paper traditionally used as writing support were originally handmade. However, Sathu Nyai Khamchan was actively engaged with manuscript work, some of which employed palm leaves and paper manufactured through industrial processes. He also utilized a variety of other modern tools to write, make corrections, and add notes to manuscripts. Furthermore, some of the manuscripts in his collection were compiled according to modern writing techniques and contain new-fashioned expressions. Some manuscripts have been checked and revised in order to make sure that they remain in a good condition and that their contents are correct. We can see from this that the manuscript culture of Luang Prabang was kept alive with great vigour by monks like Sathu Nyai Khamchan.





## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

The focus of my conclusion encapsulates and draws out the implications of the main issues discussed throughout this dissertation. Specifically, my conclusion further expounds upon: the importance of Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection of manuscripts, the results of investigation into this treasure trove of untapped knowledge, and its implication for further research.

#### Sathu Nyai Khamchan's collection

According to the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM) administered by the National Library of Laos, there are 12,168 texts available for online access. Of these, 4,352 texts are sourced from Luang Prabang province, including 4,300 texts belong to twenty-six monasteries and the Luang Prabang Provincial Museum (LPPM) located in the provincial capital of the province. The number of manuscripts from Vat Saen Sukharam (VSS), Sathu Nyai Khamchan's residence (128 texts), provides the third largest number of manuscripts behind the LPPM (1,464 texts) and Vat Mai Suvannaphumalam (2,035 texts). The remaining texts (491) belong to twenty-four monasteries, with the largest number coming from Vat Suvanna Khili (65) and the smallest amount derive from Vat Siang Kaeo (1).

After Sathu Nyai Khamchan passed away in 2007, a large number of manuscripts traditionally kept in his abode were not inventoried and studied. Five years later in 2012, these manuscripts were surveyed, inventoried, catalogued, digitized and studied by the research team of the project the *Lao Sangha and Modernity*. The research team found that 416 manuscripts<sup>119</sup> that were properly stored in cabinets in his abode were ready to be accessed. This indicates that during his lifetime these manuscripts were his possessions; some of them also seem to have been for both private use and religious ceremonies.

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<sup>119</sup> Of 416 manuscripts, about 120 palm-leaf manuscripts were brought back (recovered) from wrapped bundles of damaged manuscripts (*mat lan samlut lae teak phuk* ມັດລານຊໍາລຸດ ແລະແຕກຜູກ) by the research team of the project the *Lao Sangha and Modernity* in 2012. Some of recovered manuscripts are valuable not only for their contents, but also for their users, such as manuscript BAD-13-1-0287. This manuscript indicates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan was invited (*hap nimon* ຮັບນິມົນ) to preach by President Souphanouvong in a ritual ceremony to make merit in the name of his deceased (*phu luang lap* ຜູ້ລ່ວງລັບ), half-brother Chao Phetsarat.

In addition, some manuscripts were traditionally kept in other monastic buildings of the same monastery; for instance, 188 manuscripts were found in an ordaining hall (*sim*), 119 in a sermon hall (*sala hongtham*) and 100 (roughly) in a [monastic] museum (*phiphithaphan*). It is reasonable to say that the VSS collection, more precisely the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, consists of around 800 manuscripts, which were not accessed by the project for the *Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme* (PLMP) in 1990s. At that time the PLMP might have focused on manuscripts kept in monastic libraries or repositories (*hò tai* ຫໍໄຕ) rather than those in private collections.

I discovered that, via the colophons of the manuscripts made (*sang* ສ້າງ) by Sathu Nyai Khamchan, he made manuscripts in order to: 1) to support Buddhism (*sang vai nai phutthasana* ສ້າງໄວ້ໃນພຸດທະສາສະໜາ); 2) to dedicate merit to the deceased (*uthit ha phu luang lap* ຊຸກິດຫາຜູ້ລ່ວງລັບ); and 3) to commemorate his birthday in 1944 (at the age of 24), 1956 (36), 1976 (56), and 1991 (70) (*lalük van koet* ລະລຶກວັນເກີດ). The first and the second goals of manuscript making indicate that he followed traditions, whereas the final aim reflects that he found a new occasion for making merit. These examples are followed by his disciples and other Buddhists; for example, I found at least two manuscripts with colophons (BAD-13-1-0027 and BAD-13-1-0139) which state that a layperson, namely Sao Phaeng (ສາວແພງ), sponsored the making of two manuscripts to commemorate her birthday in 1965.

Not only did Sathu Nyai Khamchan initiate the making of manuscripts, he also repaired and checked manuscripts in his collection regularly. He, furthermore, corrected mistakes made by other scribes who either did not have enough inscribing experience or were careless when copying the manuscripts. This indicates that Sathu Nyai Khamchan had much experience in using manuscripts; in other words, he knew both the contents and orthographic system that applied for writing manuscripts very well. He might have further known that manuscripts were often made without editing, so some mistakes or missing words might be in evidence. In short, he examined manuscripts with an editor's eye for detail.

Sathu Nyai Khamchan was one of the eminent abbots and senior monks in Luang Prabang who loved to collect and read manuscripts as sermons to Buddhists in ritual ceremonies. However, Sathu Nyai Khamchan did not just appear to collect and read the manuscripts; he made manuscripts in his collection utilizing components linking the past to the future. In essence, he did not completely deny past practices but, rather, he recognized and applied some of these instead. He might have learnt that Laos had a long history of engagement in animistic magical practices – that is to say, traditions that believe in spirits – and when Buddhism was first introduced into Laos it might have come into contact with such traditions. It is thus unsurprising that his collection comprises both religious and non-

religious manuscripts, and that some of them contain various corrections. His collection is a valuable resource for the study of Buddhism in Laos.

## Research questions and study results

As detailed in Chapter 1, the main research questions investigated throughout this study are: 1) What kinds of knowledge do monks and novices possess, and how do they acquire or transmit this knowledge? And, 2) why do laypeople acknowledge the wisdom of monks and novices who have gained non-religious knowledge? To answer these questions I organized my thesis according to the following schemata: an overview, religious and non-religious knowledge, and modernity.

In Chapter 2, I provide readers with an introduction to the spread of Buddhism to Laos which is known as the Kingdom of Lan Xang, founded by the King Fa Ngum the Great in 1353. According to the chronicles of Laos, the first official introduction of Buddhism into Laos from Khmer Empire took place six years after the establishment of the kingdom, whereas the second one occurred during the reign of King Phothisarath (r. 1520–1548) and came from the Kingdom of Lan Na. It seems that the aims of both official attempts to propagate Buddhism in Laos were very similar, in essence, to replace the traditional beliefs of animism with Buddhism. However, the first Buddhist delegation might have also brought other kinds of beliefs with them, especially those related to Brahmanism. In other words, Lao Buddhism has existed side-by-side with pre-Buddhist animism and Brahmanic practices. Much later, King Phothisarath issued a royal decree forbidding the worship of spirit; it is said that he ordered the destruction of the spirit houses (*hò phi* ຫໍຜີ) and the construction of monasteries instead. Although many kings strongly promoted Buddhism and monks worked to disseminate the teachings of the Lord Buddha throughout the land, spirit houses can still be seen in many villages in Laos today.

I also discussed a variety of matters vis-à-vis Lao manuscripts including writing support, script, language, tools, initiators (sponsor, donor, and scribe), manuscript production and ownership, colophons and classification. In particular, I provided an in-depth examination of the production of manuscripts, their initiators and colophons, as these elements detail important information about each manuscript. In this study, I classified the manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan in the same way that the scholars of the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme (PLMP) and the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM) do.

Throughout Chapter 2, I discuss an interesting matter relating to the Lao names for the first and the last fascicles of a bundle (*sum* ຊຸມ) of palm-leaf manuscripts, the first of which is named in words as *phuk ton* (ຜູກຕົ້ນ), and the second as *phuk pai* (ຜູກປາຍ) (Finot

1959: 326). However, I discovered that the last fascicles of all sets of palm-leaf manuscripts in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan are denoted by numbers not words.

According to the colophons of the manuscripts kept in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan, one of the objectives of manuscript making is that donors would like to live happily in this life, more than to obtain happiness in the next life. Often, they wish to acquire merit from manuscript making to remove evils or diseases from their lives.

In this chapter, I found that Sathu Nyai Khamchan liked to commemorate his birthday by making manuscripts. Moreover, his birthday ceremony was sometimes organized for him by other senior monks and laypeople (B2435/Box B23, BAD-12-2-1987.010). This might indicate that senior monks and laypeople followed the tradition of paying respect to honoured people.

In Chapter 3, I presented selected manuscripts relating to the classifications of Vinaya, Suttanta, Chanting, Jataka, *Anisong*, and Buddhist chronicles. I also discussed the knowledge that monks (and novices) possessed regarding religious subjects and their way of learning. The texts of these categories deal with the basic rules and regulations that all monks (and other monastic members such as novices and nuns) must follow and that laypeople should observe.

Here, short explanations about the first two catalogues are presented. Vinaya is one part or division of the Buddha's teachings, more precisely the "Book" containing the rules that monks need to follow to attain perfection in their religious life. For this, I presented and discussed two example manuscripts, entitled *Kammavaca* and *Pāṭimokkha*. The former deals with a set of questions and answers used in ordination ceremonies; the latter prescribes a set of 227 rules that govern the daily activities of monks. Like Vinaya, Suttanta (Sutta) is one essential part of the Buddha's teachings; it is a collection of all of the discourses delivered by the Buddha. Together the *Abhidhamma*, Vinaya and Suttanta form the *Tiṭṭaka* (Three Baskets).

Throughout Chapter 3, I demonstrate that the text of the *Pāṭimokkha* was transferred from palm-leaf manuscripts to industrially-produced modern paper in the late 1950s, and one of main contributors to this task was Sathu Nyai Khamchan. He studied a variety of texts narrating the *Pāṭimokkha* that were inscribed on palm-leaf and paper manuscripts and compiled a new version. He asked Sathu Phò Phan, the abbot of Vat Pa Siao at the time, to copy his version. In the new version, the Tham-Lao script is still in use, but the text is contained within a concertina-format container that was made into many copies via modern printing techniques under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. According to the preface of this version, the Lao Sangha has used the same text of *Pāṭimokkha* from 1960 onwards.

According to the tradition, religious texts (especially those inscribed on palm-leaf in any variant of the Dhamma script) are believed to be sacred texts so to write something on or insert some words into the texts are completely forbidden. However, by Sathu Nyai Khamcha's lifetime this belief had changed. The era concurrent with Sathu Nyai Khamcha's life seems to be the turning point in regard to writing (that is, copying and compiling) manuscripts, including new kinds of writing material (paper), new-fashioned linguistic expressions, as well as modern writing tools and techniques utilised to produce manuscripts. The texts related to *Anisong* catalogues are good examples of these evolutionary practices.

In addition, writing and sponsoring the production of manuscripts in order to commemorate one's birthday are common in Luang Prabang, indeed, a good example of this is Sathu Nyai Khamcham himself. I found that one of his objectives for making manuscripts (*sang nangsu* ສ້າງໜັງສື) was to commemorate his birthday (that is, a total of four times). Last but not least, I discovered that manuscripts – like other religious objects, such as a statue of the Buddha and a monk's robe – can be re-donated by both the same and different people (BAD-13-1-0100 and BAD13-1-0300). In practice, some people who might observe and know what manuscripts they or other people gave to monasteries are repeatedly used, so that they are proud of them and organize ceremonies for re-donation of the manuscripts.

In Chapter 4, I examined some selected manuscripts relating to the classifications of History, Astrology, Medical treatises, Magic, Philology, Law, Literary work, Custom and Ritual. I discussed matters that reflect the knowledge of monks (and novices) in regard to non-religious subject matters, as well as the opportunities to use such text. I explain that most manuscripts in these categories contain multiple texts, especially those exploring astrology, medical treatises and magic. Furthermore, I demonstrate that some texts dealing with historical events are not written in one single palm-leaf manuscript or as part of one coherent text, but written on separate folios, some of which are attached to manuscripts containing texts of other genres (BAD-13-1-0188 and BAD-13-1-0222). A short passage relating to the situation of Luang Prabang, for example, appears after a religious text of *Thutanghavat* in manuscript BAD-13-1-0058.

Apart from this, I present and discuss a variety of selected manuscripts relating to each classification mentioned above (albeit a different number of manuscripts were examined for each of these). All selected manuscripts contain texts detailing the ways that people lived their lives in ancient times. These include, for instance, the calculation of auspicious and inauspicious days for plantations, building and moving into a new house, seeing one's relatives, naming a newly-born child and the first annual thunder (BAD-13-2-042), and *palasük 9 tua* (nine-fatal offences) (BAD-13-2-050). I demonstrate that the title

(word) *palasük* relates to the rule for monastic members, but the nine articles of this *palasük* seem to have been laid down to ensure that the subjects remain loyal to their king.

Throughout Chapter 4, I first discussed that both religious and non-religious manuscripts are kept in the same cabinets in a Buddha statue altar room (*hòng vai pha ຫ້ອງໄຫວ້ພະ*) in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. This suggests that these non-religious manuscripts were also considered as important objects, although no evidence proves that they were used by Sathu Nyai Khamchan when he was alive.

Not only are religious and non-religious manuscripts kept in the same places, texts dealing with historical information also appear in religious manuscripts, for instance, in BAD-13-1-0058 and BAD-13-1-0222. The former manuscript is entitled *Thutangkhavat* (“The thirteen ascetic practices”), the latter *Uppakhut phap pha-nya man* (“Monk Uppakhut defeated the king of *māra*”). A short passage dealing with the situation in Luang Prabang in AD 1854 appears after the text of the former, whereas an insertion into the text of the latter deals with six kings of the Kingdom of Lan Xang who are said to have built monasteries and stupas (*that ຫາດ*) in Luang Prabang.

Buddhist (Pali) words are combined with Lao words in order to form a magic spell (*khatha ຄາຖາ*) of protection. Two manuscripts BAD-13-1-0079 and BAD-13-2-007 may exemplify this; they contain texts indicating that the Triple Gems were incorporated with specific Lao words for the composition of magic. This indicates that the persons who composed it – whether monks or laypeople – might have possessed specialist knowledge pertaining to both religious and non-religious subjects. In other words, they might have tried to make it so that Buddhists and animists were happy to co-exist with each other in the same society. Some Lao people, for example, claim to be Buddhists, but if they cannot find an appropriate answer to a question on the boundary between the use of magic spell by the indigenous tradition of Laos and the practice of Buddhism. Then, they mostly seek an answer to the question by listening to sermons and discussing topics they are interested in with monks or Buddhist scholars in their villages. Indeed, some Lao Buddhists have spirit altars in their own residences and agricultural land.

I found that predictions of people’s futures depend on the Year of the Animals (twelve years) in which they were born (*pi koet ປີເກີດ*); and these predictions link their former lives to the circumstances to come. According to manuscript BAD-13-1-0057, people’s lives relate to the former births of the Buddha or Jataka stories. For instance, a person who was born in a *nyi* year (Year of the Tiger) stayed with Chao Chanthakumman and a person who was born in a *mot* year (Year of the Goat) stayed with Chao Mahosot. It seems, however, that the compiler of these predictions might wanted the stories of Chao

Chanthakumman and Chao Mahosot to be learned, rather than to predict the fate of people who were born in a *nyi* year and a *mot* year.

In Chapter 5, I presented and discussed matters that appear in manuscripts and reflect the influence of modern writing techniques, such as insertions, corrections, as well as writing style and tools. According to their contents, I divided the insertions into two classifications: introductory and explanation texts. I explained that corrections in any manuscript were also made by scribes who wrote that manuscript. The incisions of the corrections and text contained in the manuscript are as darkened as to each other. But in this chapter the corrections seem to be made by people who used the manuscripts – in other words who seem to be editors. In addition, the corrective tools utilized were pens and ballpoint pens, not styli.

I found that two insertions, which were written on separate leaves, in BAD-13-1-0287 and BAD-13-1-0169 seem to be written for specific purposes, in essence, that each of them might be used only one time. This may be one reason that BAD-13-1-0287 was not kept in a cabinet but found in a wrapped package of damaged manuscripts.

Together with the insertions and corrections, I demonstrated both traditional and modern style of writing manuscripts. According to tradition, spaces and punctuation marks in the texts contained in old manuscripts are very rare, but manuscripts that are written from the nineteenth century on contain many kinds of punctuation marks; and some texts are written in three columns. In addition, the dating system of some manuscripts begins from the smallest part to the biggest part or from “day to year”, whereas the traditional way of dating manuscripts starts from the biggest part to the smallest part or from “year to day”.

Regarding to writing tools, some manuscripts kept in the abode of Sathu Nyai Khamchan were produced with ballpoint pens, chalk, typewriters, and computers. Furthermore, some manuscripts indicate that correction liquid was applied during the manuscript making process.

Most matters presented and discussed in Chapter 5 are new and diverge from traditional practices. First of all, a new vision regarding the production and usage of religious manuscripts in Laos might have started from Sathu Nyai Khamchan’s time onwards. Even though manuscripts are still regarded as sacred, they are now accessible and allowed to be studied scientifically. The PLMP launched during 1990s is one program which illustrates this practice.

With regard to the subject of pagination, I found that folios of palm-leaf manuscripts in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan – in essence, those that are inscribed from 1940 onwards and mostly *Anisong* manuscripts – are utilize two systems of pagination. In short, cardinal numbers, and combinations of consonants and vowels according to Sanskrit

orthography are used alongside each other: the former is in the left margin of the recto and the latter is also in the same margin, but of the verso.

With regard to the ability of monks and novices to read variants of the Dhamma script, one unexpected finding while surveying the five monasteries in Luang Prabang was that a large number of manuscripts in the monasteries had not been inventoried and studied. Most of these manuscripts belonged to senior monks while they were still alive. The manuscripts were kept in a variety of traditionally styled boxes (*hip tham* ຫີບທຳ) and modern cabinets. On several occasions, I spoke with young monks and novices about the manuscripts in the monasteries, most of whom had limited knowledge of these. While some could read the manuscripts, none could do so fluently.

The making of manuscripts for the commemoration of a person's birthday – as stated in the colophons of particular manuscripts – is for the specific purpose of merit-making and preserving the cultural heritage of the Buddhist community of Luang Prabang. An outstanding example of this performance of merit-making was by a senior monk; Buddhists in the old capital of Lan Xang have recognized this performance.

Some manuscripts may have been influenced by printed texts and their layout. Numerous texts written on palm-leaf and paper contain various types of punctuation marks, which are written in a form similar to that of present-day publications. This indicates that some scribes might have had access to different types of modern printed publications and considered texts written in the modern style more convenient for reading. Furthermore, they may have also been fascinated by the formatting and technologies enabling the creation of such texts, inspiring them to use similar styles in their own manuscripts. This should also be understood as an important turning point in the culture of writing/copying of manuscripts in Luang Prabang.

## **Implications for further research**

Lao and foreign scholars exhibit interest in the history of Buddhism in Laos, but historical sources concerning the introduction of Buddhism into Laos are rare, especially at the time of the establishment of the Kingdom of Lan Xang. Therefore, papers, books, and other writing on this issue are mostly based on tales, legends, chronicles and other kinds of local sources. Manuscripts that are kept in monastic buildings contain not only religious texts, but also secular subjects – or at least other kind of evidence such as places, people, and inscriptions (perhaps) – which might provide us with important information about the lifestyles and wishes of both monastic members and laypeople.



The collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan (Vat Saen Sukharam) comprises four sub-collections which were stored in: his abode (*kuti*), ordination hall (*sim*), sermon hall (*sala hongtham*) and museum (*phiphithaphan*). Manuscripts kept in the last sub-collection (museum) have not yet been surveyed, inventoried and studied. Similarly, manuscripts traditionally kept in other monasteries, especially in the abodes of senior monks or abbots, might be in a similar condition. These manuscripts will eventually be destroyed due to the hot humid climate, insects, fire, rain and other causes of damage, if they are not preserved and secured forthwith. Indicatively, a large portion of manuscripts in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan have already been secured damaged (BAD-13-1-01—BAD-13-1-41).

The manuscripts may also open up studies in the Tham-Lao orthography. Indeed, some manuscripts kept in the collection of Sathu Nyai Khamchan detail the development of the orthographic system of the Tham-Lao script. Numerous shortened words (*kham nyò*), which were compulsorily used before his time, are replaced with full words; final consonants appear as full script instead of as sub-script, which was very strictly regulated before the lifetime of Sathu Nyai Khamchan. The Tham-Lao script is a variant of the Dhamma script which is mostly used for writing religious texts, so that it is used for learning to read and write in monasteries; whereas the Lao script is used for writing secular documents. The Tham-Lao and Lao scripts are used alongside each other and their orthographic rules are similar. Furthermore, the first and the second tone marks (*mai ek* and *mai tho*) are applied while inscribing manuscripts. In the Sathu Nyai Khamchan corpus the first consistent use of the two tone marks appears in a palm-leaf manuscript dated AD 1919, i.e. one year before Sathu Nyai Khamchan was born and twenty-two years before he was ordained as a monk in 1941; that is to say, sixteen years before the first Lao grammar book was published in 1935. The tone marks might be used in writing for the Lao script at the time they were used in writing for the Tham-Lao script.

I hope that my study of manuscripts found in the abode of the venerable Abbot Sathu Nyai Khamchan Virachitto had shed new light on transmission traditional knowledge in a Lao monastic environment and has provided new insights in Lao manuscript culture, two rather neglected fields of research. May it inspire futher explanation in this exciting world.



## Bibliography

### A Archival sources (Buddhist Archive, Luang Prabang)

#### A.1 Manuscripts: palm-leaf and paper manuscripts kept in Sathu Nyai Khamchan's abode, Vat Saen, Vat Khili, Vat Xiang Thòng, Vat Pak Khan and Vat Xiang Muan.

BAD-13-1-0002: ສະໝາດກິນນະລີ Samat Kinnali [The abridged [legend of] Kinnari], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 16 folios; CS 1286 (AD 1924).

BAD-13-1-0004: ມາລະວິໄຊ ຜູກ ໑ Malavisai Phuk 1 [Victory over the devil, fascicle 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 31 folios; BE 2490 (AD 1947).

BAD-13-1-0005: ມາລະວິໄຊ ຜູກ ໒ Malavisai Phuk 2 [Victory over the devil, fascicle 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; BE 2490 (AD 1947).

BAD-13-1-0006: ມາລະວິໄຊ ຜູກ ໓ Malavisai Phuk 3 [Victory over the devil, fascicle 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 22 folios; BE 2490 (AD 1947).

BAD-13-1-0007: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໑ Chet Tamnan Kan 1 [A set of prayers about seven myths, chapter 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0008: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໒ Chet Tamnan Kan 2 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 13 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0009: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໓ Chet Tamnan Kan 3 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 3], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0010: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໔ Chet Tamnan Kan 4 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 4], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0011: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໕ Chet Tamnan Kan 5 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 5], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0012: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໖ Chet Tamnan Kan 6 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 6], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0013: ເຈັດຕໍານານ ກັນ ໗ Chet Tamnan Kan 7 [A set of prayers about seven myths chapter 7], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 15 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-13-1-0014: ພື້ນພະແຊກຄໍາ Phün Pha Saek Kham [The legend of the Pha Saek Kham Buddha

- image], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 45 folios; BE 2388 (AD 1845).
- BAD-13-1-0015: ສຸດຕະໂສມ Suttasom [A story of Suttasom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; BE 2481 (AD 1938).
- BAD-13-1-0017: Untitled, related to Buddhist chronicle, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0016: ລັດຕະນະຈຸງຄຸລີ Lattana Chungkhuli [A text deals with the removal of bad luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 3 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0019: ອຸນຫັດສະວີໄຊ Unhatsa Visai [a text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 11 folios; BE 2505 (AD 1962).
- BAD-13-1-0020: ມະຫາລັດຕະນະຈຸງຄຸລີຫຼວງ Maha Lattana Chungkhuli Luang [A text deals with the removal of bad luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 10 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0024: ນິດໂສມາໄລໂຜດສັດ Nitsai Malai Phot Sat [Monk Malai shows mercy to all beings], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; CS 1273 (AD 1911).
- BAD-13-1-0025: ກຸມມານບັນທຶນ ຜູກ ໑໐ Kumman Ban Ton Phuk 10 [the title of Chapter 8 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 10, namely Kumman vol. 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 22 folios; undated).
- BAD-13-1-0026: ສະຫຼອງມະຫາກະຖິນ Salòng Maha Kathin [The merit gained by giving *kathin* to a monk], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 5 folios; AD 1978.
- BAD-13-1-0027: ອຸນຫັດສະວີໄຊ Unhatsa Visai [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 6 folios; BE 2508 (AD 1965).
- BAD-13-1-0028: ທຳມະວິສຸດທິຍາ Thamma Visutthinya [A text related to general Buddhist teachings, Pali: *dhamma visuddhiyā*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 11 folios; BE 2532 (AD 1989).
- BAD-13-1-0029: ຊຸນຈິກ Chunchok [the title of Chapter 5 of Vessantara Jataka, namely Sunchok; Tai-Lü version], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lü and Pali; script: Tham-Lü; 22 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0032: ກຸມມານບັນປາຍ Kumman Ban Pai [the title of Chapter 8 of Vessantara Jataka, namely Kumman vol.2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0057: ປີເກີດ Pi Koet [Birth Year], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 45 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0058: ທຸ້ຕັງຄະວັດ Thutangkhatvat [The thirteen ascetic practices], palm-leaf manuscript,

- six fascicles; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 193 folios; CS 1215 (AD 1853).
- BAD-13-1-0059: ທຸຕັງຄະວັດ ຜູກຕົ້ນ Thutangkhavat Phuk Ton [The thirteen ascetic practices, Fascicle 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 92 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0065: ທິບພະມົນ Thippha Mon [A heavenly incantation], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0066: Untitled, related to an anointing ceremony, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0067: Untitled, related to manners of husband and wife, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0069: Untitled, related to monastic discipline, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 21 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0070: ອານິສົງເປດ ຜູກຕົ້ນ Anisong Paet Phuk Ton [The Eight *Anisong*, Fascicle 1, related to tradition and ceremony], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0071: ປາລີເອກະນິບາດ Pali Ekanibat [A text in Pali, namely *eka nipāta*, a section of a book], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; CS 1098 (AD 1736).
- BAD-13-1-0072: ອະນິດຈະທໍາ Anitcha Tham [A text related to general Buddhist teachings], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0073: ສະໝາດສີສຸທິນ Samat Sisuthon [An abridgement of the story of Sisuthon], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0074: ມະຫາວິບາກຮອມ Maha Vibak Hòm [A text related to result of accumulated merits and sins], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 22 folios; BE 2516 (AD 1973).
- BAD-13-1-0075: ສອງເຂົ້າປະດັບດິນ Sòng Khao Padap Din [The merit gained by giving monks *khao padap din*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 5 folios; BE 2511 (AD 1968).
- BAD-13-1-0076: ສູດມົນເດິກ Sut Mon Doek [A set of texts (in Pali) for chanting before dawn], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 60 folios; BE 2491 (AD 1948).
- BAD-13-1-0077: ສູດມົນເດິກ Sut Mon Doek [A set of texts (in Pali) for chanting before dawn], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 49 folios; CS 1271 (AD 1909).
- BAD-13-1-0078: Untitled, related to a text written in Pali, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 52 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0079: ສືບຊາຕາເຮືອນ-ໄຮ່-ນາ Süp Sata Hüan Hai Na [A text related to prolonging the

- lifetime of a house and rice fields], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 9 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0080: ຢາພື້ນເມືອງ Ya Phünmüang [Traditional medicine], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao Buhan; 26 folios; CS 1302 (AD 1940).
- BAD-13-1-0082: ປັນຍາປາລະມີກິງແກ້ວ Pannya Parami Kong Kaeo [A related to removal of bad luck and illness], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 7 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0083: ອຸນຫັດສະວິໄຊ Unhatsa Visai [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 11 folios; CS 1303 (AD 1941).
- BAD-13-1-0088: ຍອດໄຕ Nyòt Tai [A text related to the Buddha's daily activities], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 28 folios; CS 1279 (AD 1917).
- BAD-13-1-0089: ອາກາລະວັດຕະສູດ Akalavatta Sut [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 35 folios; CS 1282 (AD 1920).
- BAD-13-1-0090: ມູນລະນິບພານ Munlanipphan [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha's *parinibbāna*” (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 32 folios; CS 1283 (AD 1921).
- BAD-13-1-0095: ໂຄວິນທະສູດ Khovintha Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “Thirty-Three Gods” (Pali: *mahāgovinda sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 26 folios; CS 1270 (AD 1908).
- BAD-13-1-0099: ນະຄອນ ຜູກ ໑໖ Nakhòn Phuk 16 [The title of Chapter 13 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 16, namely Nakhòn], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; CS 1286 (AD 1924).
- BAD-13-1-0100: ມຸງຄຸນສູດ Mungkhun Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “Blessings” (Pali: *maṅgala sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 57 folios; two dates: CS 1280 (AD 1918), CS 1282 (AD 1920).
- BAD-13-1-0102: ອາກາລະວັດຕະສູດ Akalavatta Sut [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 33 folios; BE 2473, CS 1292 (AD 1930).
- BAD-13-1-0104: ລາຊະສູດ Lasa Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “Kings” (Pali: *rāja sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 31 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0105: ສາລາກາລະວິຊາສູດ Salakalavisa Sut [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; CS 1282 (AD 1920).
- BAD-13-1-0106: ມະຫາມູນລະນິບພານສູດ Maha Mula Nipphan Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha's *parinibbāna*” (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 40 folios; CS 1282 (AD 1920).

- BAD-13-1-0107: ພະອຸບປະຄຸດຜາບພະຍາມານ Pha Uppakhut Phap Phanya Man [Monk Uppakhut defeats the king of *māra*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 14 folios; BE 2528 (AD 1985).
- BAD-13-1-0108: ເຫວດສັນຕະລະວິບາກ Vetsantara Vibak [The result of Prince Vessantara's action], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 12 folios; BE 2528 (AD 1985).
- BAD-13-1-0109: ມາໄລໝີ້ນ Malai Mün [Monk Malai's travels to hell], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 12 folios; BE 2528 (AD 1985).
- BAD-13-1-0110: ມາໄລແສນ Malai Saen [Monk Malai's travels to heaven], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 14 folios; BE 2528 (AD 1985).
- BAD-13-1-0111: ສັງກາດຫຼວງ Sangkat Luang [A text related to the Buddhist chronicle], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 13 folios; BE 2528 (AD 1985).
- BAD-13-1-0112: ສະຫຼອງເຂົ້າພັນກ້ອນ Salòng Khao Phan Kòn [The merit gained by making a thousand of rice balls to worship the Triple Gems], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 5 folios; BE 2533 (AD 1990).
- BAD-13-1-0113: ອົງການພະເຈົ້າ ໕ ພະອົງ Ongkan Pha Chao Ha Phaong [The Five Buddhas' Decrees], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 21 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0114: ຫົມມະພານ ບັນປາຍ Himmaphan Ban Pai [The title of Chapter 2 of the Vessantara Jataka, namely Himmaphan, vol. 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; BE 2471 (AD 1928).
- BAD-13-1-0115: ຫົມມະພານບັນຕິນ ຜູກ ໒ Himmaphan Ban Ton Phuk 2 [The title of Chapter 2 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 2, namely Himmaphan, vol. 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 19 folios; CS 1281 (AD 1919).
- BAD-13-1-0127: ສະໝາດສີສຸທິນ Samat Sisuthon [An abridgement of the story of Sisuthon], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 22 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).
- BAD-13-1-0128: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; BE 2487 (AD 1944).
- BAD-13-1-0139: ມະຫາມູນລະນິບພານ Maha Munlanipphan [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha's *parinibbāna*”, Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 32 folios; BE 2508 (AD 1965).
- BAD-13-1-0145: ນິບພານະສູດ Nipphana Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha's *parinibbāna*”, Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 21 folios; CS 1282 (AD 1920).
- BAD-13-1-0146: ມະຫາຊາດຕອນມະຫາລາດ ຜູກ ໑໔ Maha Sat Tòn Mahalat Phuk 14 [The title of Chapter 11 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 14, namely Mahalat], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 26 folios; CS 1281 (AD 1919).
- BAD-13-1-0148: ສູດມົນເດິກ ຜູກຕົ້ນ Sut Mon Doek Phuk Ton, a set of texts (in Pali) for chanting before dawn, fascicle 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 34

- folios; CS 1249 (AD 1887).
- BAD-13-1-0149: ມະຫາວິບາກເຜດ Maha Vibak Phet [Extensive consequences of unhappy ghosts' action, Pali: *mahāvīpāka peta*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2510 (AD 1967).
- BAD-13-1-0150: ຊຸນຫັດສະວິໄຊ Unhatsa Visai [A text used for expelling misfortune from one's body and bringing good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 10 folios; CS 1304 (AD 1942).
- BAD-13-1-0153: Untitled, related to anointing leaf (Lap Hot), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; 26.12.[19]47.
- BAD-13-1-0154: Untitled, related to Buddhist chronicle, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0155: ປັນຍາປາລະມີ Pannya Palami [The perfection of wisdom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 8 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0156: ອານິສິງສ້າງພະພຸດທະຮູບ Anisong Sang Pha Phutthahup [The merit gained by sponsoring the production of a Buddha statue], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 6 folios; AD 1988, BE 2530.
- BAD-13-1-0157: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 40 folios; BE 2487 (AD 1944).
- BAD-13-1-0160: ສືບຊາຕາ Süp Sata [Prolonging one's life], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 5 folios; BE 2534 (AD 1991).
- BAD-13-1-0163: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 31 folios; BE 2487 (AD 1944).
- BAD-13-1-0164: ມັງຄະລະສູດ Mangkhala Sut [The discourse of the Buddha on “Blessings” (Pali: *maṅgala sutta*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; BE 2489 (AD 1946).
- BAD-13-1-0166: ຄູລູທຳ Khulutham [A text related to general Buddhist teachings (Pali: *gurudhamma*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; CS 1281 (AD 1919).
- BAD-13-1-0167: ສົງວສະຫວາດ Siasavat [The story of Siasavat], palm-leaf manuscript, 12 fascicles; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 316 folios; CS 1291 (AD 1929).
- BAD-13-1-0169: ພະທຳມະເທສະໜາສອນປະຊາຊົນ ຜູກທີ ໒໔ Pha Thamma Thesana Sòn Pasason Phukthi 24 [A sermon for teaching people, Fascicle 24], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali, Thai and Lao; script: Thai and Lao; 17 folios; BE 2477 (AD 1934).
- BAD-13-1-0175: Untitled, related to chants, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0176: ສູດໄຊມ້ອຍ Sut Sai Nòi [A text (in Pali) recited for bringing people good luck], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 4 folios; undated.



- BAD-13-1-0177: ສະໝາດກິນນະລີ Samat Kinnali [The abridged story of Kinnari], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 9 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0178: ສະໝາດກິນນະລີ Samat Kinnali [The abridged story of Kinnari], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 10 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0183: Untitled, related to Buddhist chronicle, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Lao; 2 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0186: ກຸມມານບັນຕິນ Kumman Ban Ton [The title of Chapter 8 of Vessantara Jataka, namely Kumman, vol. 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Lao; 18 folios; BE 2527 (AD 1984).
- BAD-13-1-0188: Untitled, related to secular a chronicle, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao; 1 leaf; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0189: ທິບພະມົນນ້ອຍ Thipphamon Nòi [A minor heavenly incantation], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 8 folios; CS 1278 (AD 1916).
- BAD-13-1-0191: ອານິສິງພອກຄໍາພະພຸດທະຮູບ Anisong Phòk Kham Pha Phuttha Hup [The merit gained by sticking golden leaves on a Buddha statue], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 6 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0193: ພົມມະທັດຖອດຈິດ Phommathat Thòt Chit [King Phommathat takes out his mind], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; BE 2483 (AD 1940).
- BAD-13-1-0195: ນິຍາຍພົມພາຮໍາໄຮ Ninyai Phimpha Hamhai [The story of Princess Phimpha's lament], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 37 folios; BE 2486 (AD 1943).
- BAD-13-1-0196: ນິຍາຍລັດສິງສິງ Ninyai Lassi Sing [The story of Lassi Sing], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 22 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0200: Untitled, related to general Buddhism, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 17 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0206: ອານິສິງເຮັດບຸນວັນເກີດ Anisong Het Bun Van Koet [The merit gained by organizing birthday celebration], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Lao; 6 folios; BE 2531 (AD 1988).
- BAD-13-1-0208: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 35 folios; BE 2487 (AD 1944).
- BAD-13-1-0217: ຫົມມະພານບັນຕິນ Himmaphan Ban Ton [The title of Chapter 2 of Vessantara Jataka, namely Himmaphan, vol. 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 16 folios; CS 1270 (AD 1908).
- BAD-13-1-0218: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; CS 1338 (AD 1976).
- BAD-13-1-0220: ສອງພະຊາຍ Sòng Pha Sai [The merit gained by building sand stupa], palm-leaf

- manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 5 folios; CS 1286 (AD 1924).
- BAD-13-1-0221: ມະຫາວິບາກ Maha Vibak [The extensive consequence of one's action, Pali: *mahā vipāka*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 12 folios; CS 1302 (AD 1940).
- BAD-13-1-0222: ພະອຸບປະຄຸດຜາບພະຍາມານ Pha Uppakhut Phap Phanya Man [Monk Uppakhut defeats the king of *māra*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 27 folios; CS 1338 (AD 1976).
- BAD-13-1-0223: ພະອຸບປະຄຸດຜາບພະຍາມານ Pha Uppakhut Phap Phanya Man [Monk Uppakhut defeats the king of *māra*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 26 folios; BE 2519 (AD 1976).
- BAD-13-1-0224: ພຸດທະໄຊຍະມຸງຄຸນ Phuttha Sayamungkhun [Buddha's prosperous victory, Pali: *Buddha jaya maṅgala*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 7 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0225: ມະຫາຊາດຕອນນະຄອນ ຜູກ ໑໖ [Maha Sat Tòn Nakhòn Phuk 16 [The title of Chapter 13 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 16, namely Nakhòn], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; CS 1281 (AD 1919).
- BAD-13-1-0227: ຫັດສະພອນ ຜູກຖ້ວນ ໑ [Thatsaphòn Phuk Thuan 1 [The title of Chapter 1 of Vessantara Jataka, Fascicle 1, namely Thatsaphòn], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 17 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0229: ປັດຈະເວກຂະນະສູດ Patchavekkhana Sut [The Buddhist Discourse on Consideration, Pali: *paccavekkhana sutta*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 24 folios; BE 2538 (AD 1995).
- BAD-13-1-0230: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 92 folios; BE 2487 (AD 1944).
- BAD-13-1-0231: ປະລາພະວະສູດ Palaphava Sut [The Buddhist Discourse on Downfall (Pali: *parābhava sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; BE 2472, CS 12291 (AD 1929).
- BAD-13-1-0232: ຕໍານານດອຍຕຸງ Tamnan Dòi Tung [The legend of Dòi Tung Mountain], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao, Lü and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Tham-Lü; 33 folios; CS 1224 (AD 1862).
- BAD-13-1-0234: ຄິລິມານັນທະສູດ Khilimanantha Sut [The Buddhist Discourse to Girimānanda Thera (Pali: *Girimānanda sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 26 folios; BE 2512 (AD 1969).
- BAD-13-1-0237: ສັງຄາຍະນາ ຜູກ ໒ Sangkhanyana Phuk 2 [The Great Buddhist Council, Fascicle 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 27 folios; CS 1257 (AD 1895).
- BAD-13-1-0246: ພະລະສັງຂະຫຍາ ຜູກຕົ້ນ Phala Sangkhanya Phuk Ton [An Extra-Jataka, manely

- Balasaṅkhyā*, literally a number of powers, Fascicle 1], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0247: ກຸມມານບັນປາຍ Kumman Ban Pai [The title of Chapter 8 of Vessantara Jataka, namely Kumman, vol. 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0248: ພະລະສັງຂະຫຍາ ຜູກຖ້ວນ ກຸ Phala Sangkhanya Phuk Thuan 7 [An Extra-Jataka, namely *Balasaṅkhyā*, literally a number of powers, Fascicle 7], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 24 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0263: ມູນລະນິບພານ Mula Nipphan [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*” (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 37 folios; CS 1291 (AD 1929).
- BAD-13-1-0268: ພະເຈົ້າລຽບໂລກ ຜູກ ໓ Pha Chao Liap Lok Phuk 3 [The Buddha travelled around the world, Fascicle 3], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; CS 1255 (AD 1893).
- BAD-13-1-0279: ສຸຊາວັນນະຈັກ Susa Vannachak [The story of Susa Vannachak], palm-leaf manuscript, nine fascicles; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 177 folios; CS 1236 (AD 1874).
- BAD-13-1-0280: ພິກຂຸປາຕິໂມກ ແລະວິທີບັນພະຊາ ອຸປະສົມບົດ Phikkhu Patimok Lae Vithi Banphasa Uppasombot [Texts related to 227 precepts for monks and ordination procedure], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 92 folios; BE 2499 (AD 1956), BE 2490 (AD 1947).
- BAD-13-1-0281: ສຸວັນນະເມຄະໝາຂົນຄໍາ Suvannamakha Ma Khon Kham [A story of the dog with golden fur], palm-leaf manuscript, six fascicles; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 160 folios; CS 1277 (AD 1915).
- BAD-13-1-0289: ຮ່າງຄໍາລົງທ້າຍການສ້າງໜັງສື Hang Kham Long Thai Khan Sang Nangsü [A formula for colophon pertaining to the sponsoring manuscripts], palm-leaf manuscript, language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 9 folios; BE 2539, AD 1996; BE 2542, AD 1998/99.
- BAD-13-1-0287: ຄໍາຂຶ້ນຕົ້ນເທດ Kham Khün Ton Thet [An introductory text which is recited before chanting a main text], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao; 2 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0292: ມະຫາມູນລະນິບພານ Maha Mula Nipphan [The discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*” (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; CS 1285 (AD 1923).
- BAD-13-1-0293: ວິໄນສັບກໍາມະມາຈາ Vinai Sap Kammavacha [A word-by-word translation from Pali into Lao of Kammavacha, the set of questions and answers which is used in an ordination ceremony], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0295: ສະຫຼອງແປດໝື່ນ[ສີ່ພັນຂັ້ນ] ຜູກຖ້ວນ ໙ Salòng Paet Mūn [si phan khan] Phuk Thuan Kao [The merit gained by sponsoring manuscripts which contains eighty[-four] thousand

- divisions of the Buddha's Teachings, Fascicle 9], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 10 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0296: ແປດໝື່ນ[ສີ່ພັນຂັ້ນ (ແປດຜູກ)] Paet Mūn [si phan khan] [Eighty[-four] thousand divisions of the Buddha's Teachings] (eight fascicles), palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 107 folios; CS 1223 (AD 1861).
- BAD-13-1-0299: ສັດທາວິມາລາ Sattha Vimala [A text deals with a description on the parts of human beings], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; CS 1258 (AD 1896).
- BAD-13-1-0300: ມະຫາວິບາກ Maha Vibak [The extensive consequence of one's action, Pali: *mahā vipāka*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 24 folios; BE 2498 (AD 1955).
- BAD-13-1-0302: ອານິສິງກໍພະເຈດີຊາຍ Anisong Kò Pha Chedi Sai [The merit gained by building sand stupa], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 6 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0303: ແປດໝື່ນ[ສີ່ພັນຂັ້ນ] ຜູກ ໕ Paet Mūn [si phan khan] Phuk 5 [Eighty[-four] thousand divisions of the Buddha's Teaching, Fascicle 5], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; CS 1237 (AD 1875).
- BAD-13-1-0304: ລັກຂະນະເມົາເຫຼົ້າ Lakkhana Mao Lao [Characters of being drunk, a traditional law], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0306: ພະປະລະມັດທຍ໌ ຜູກຕົ້ນ Pha Palamat Nyò Phuk Ton [An abridgement of truth in ultimate sense, Fascicle 1 (Pali: *paramattha*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 73 folios; CS 1288 (AD 1926).
- BAD-13-1-0307: ພື້ນພະເຈົ້າ ໑໐ ພະອົງ Phün Pha Chao 10 Pha-ong [A legend of the Ten Buddhas], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 23 folios; CS 1257 (AD 1895).
- BAD-13-1-0308: ມະຫາມູນລະນິບພານສູດ Maha Mula Nipphan Sut [The discourse [of the Buddha] on "the Buddha's *parinibbāna*" (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 37 folios; BE 2486 (AD 1943).
- BAD-13-1-0309: ມູນລະນິບພານ Munla Nipphan [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on "the Buddha's *parinibbāna*" (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 29 folios; BE 2473 (AD 1955).
- BAD-13-1-0310: ມະຫາມູນລະນິບພານສູດ [Maha Mula Nipphan Sut [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on "the Buddha's *parinibbāna*" (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 36 folios; CS 1282 (AD 1920).
- BAD-13-1-0312: ອຸປປະສິມບົດ Uppasombot [A text deals with ordination procedure, Pali: *upasampadā*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 32 folios; CS 1246 (AD 1884).

- BAD-13-1-0313: ພະຍາສັດທັນ Phanya Satthan [The story of King Satthan], palm-leaf manuscript, two fascicles; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 54 folios; BE 2471 (AD 1930).
- BAD-13-1-0314: ກາບພະເຈົ້ານິບພານ Kap Pha Chao Nipphan [The Discourse [of the Buddha] on “the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*” (Pali: *mahāparinibbāna sutta*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 17 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0315: ທະສະລາຊະທຳ ປາລະຊຶກ ໙ Thasa Lasatham, Palasük Kao [The royal ten rules, nine fatal offenses], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; CS 1289 (AD 1927).
- BAD-13-1-0317: ພື້ນພະເຈົ້າ ໑໐ ພະອົງ Phün Pha Chao 10 Pha-ong [A legend of the ten Buddhas], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; two dates: CS 1206 (AD 1844) and CS 1226 (AD 1864).
- BAD-13-1-0318: ສັງກາດຫຼວງ Sangkat Luang [A text related to Buddhist chronicle], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 16 folios; CS 1270 (AD 1908).
- BAD-13-1-0319: ໂອວາທະປາຕິໂມກ Ovatha Patimok [A text deals with an instruction on obligation (Pali: *ovāda pāṭimokkha*)], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 75 folios; BE 2474, CS 1293 (AD 1931).
- BAD-13-1-0321: ພະເຈົ້າ ໑໐ ພະອົງ Pha Chao 10 Pha-ong [A legend of the Ten Buddhas], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; CS 1220 (AD 1858).
- BAD-13-1-0322: ບົວລະພັນທະ ຜູກ ໒ Bualaphantha Phuk 2 [A story of Bualaphantha, Fascicle 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0328: ທຸຕັງຄະວັດ ຜູກ ໒ Thutangkhavat Phuk 2 [The thirteen ascetic practices, Fascicle 2], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 69 folios; BE 2407 (AD 1864).
- BAD-13-1-0330: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 19 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0331: ອັກຂະຫຼະວິພັດທິປະນີ Akkhala Viphatthipani, related to Pali grammar], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 30 folios; undated.
- BAD-13-1-0433: ມະຫາວິບາກເຜດ Maha Vibak Phet [Extensive consequences of unhappy ghosts’ action, Pali: *mahāvīpāka peta*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 14 folios; AD 1980.
- BAD-13-2-001: Untitled, related to traditional medicine and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao, Lü and Pali; script: Tham-Lao, Tham-Lü and Lao Buhan; 16 pages; CS 1254 (AD 1892).
- BAD-13-2-002: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, magic, auspicious moments and meditation, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 26 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-003: Untitled and undated, related to astrology, Pali grammar and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 57 pages.

- BAD-13-2-005: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, magic and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao, and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 30 pages; CS 1254 (AD 1892).
- BAD-13-2-007: Untitled and undated, related to astrology, magic, auspicious moments and traditional medicine, paper manuscript; language: Lao, Pali and Lü; script: Tham-Lao and Tham-Lü; 59 pages.
- BAD-13-2-008: Untitled, related to meditation, traditional medicine and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 31 pages; CS 1245 (AD 1883).
- BAD-13-2-010: Untitled, related to various notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao Buhan; 13 pages.
- BAD-13-2-013: Untitled, related to Buddhist chronicle, traditional medicine, astrology and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao, Tai Lü and Pali; script: Tham-Lao, Tham-Lü and Lao Buhan; 52 pages; CS 1225 (AD 1883).
- BAD-13-2-014: Untitled, related to statements and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao Buhan; 28 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-015: ກ້າມສາບາມ Kan Saban [A sheet of oath], paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 13 pages; CS 1245 (AD 1883).
- BAD-13-2-018: ຍັດຕິກຳມະວາຈາ Nyatti Kammavacha [Questions, answers and instructions which are used in an ordination ceremony, Pali: *yati kammavācā*, literally a guidance of speech on sacrificial process of work], paper manuscript; language: Pali, Lan Na and Lao; script: Tham-Lan Na, Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 44 pages; CS 1153 (AD 1791).
- BAD-13-2-019: ກຳມະວາຈາ Kammavacha [Questions, answers and instructions which are used in an ordination ceremony, Pali: *kammavācā*, literally a speech on sacrificial process of work], paper manuscript; language: Pali and Myanmar (Burmese); script: Myanmar (Burmese); 42 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-020: ກຳມະວາຈາ Kammavacha [Questions, answers and instructions which are used in an ordination ceremony, Pali: *kammavācā*, literally a speech on sacrificial process of work], paper manuscript; language: Pali and Myanmar (Burmese); script: Myanmar (Burmese); 46 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-021: Untitled, related to removal of bad luck, auspicious moment, magic and notes, paper manuscript; language: Lao, Pali, Lü and Lao; script: Tham-Lü, Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 82 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-031: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 16 pages; AD 2004.
- BAD-13-2-032: ອານິສິງສ້າງພະໄຕປິດິກ [Anisong Sang Pha Taipidok (The merit gained by sponsoring the production of Tipiṭaka manuscript), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Lao; 16 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-033: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali;

- script: Tham-Lao; 11 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-034: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 24 pages; AD 2004.
- BAD-13-2-035: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 22 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-036: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 28 pages; AD 2004.
- BAD-13-2-037: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 14 pages; AD 2004.
- BAD-13-2-038: Collection of *Anisong* texts (Sòng), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 38 pages; AD 2004.
- BAD-13-2-039: ຈຸນທະສຸກະລິກະສູດ [Chuntha Sukalika Sut [A text deals with the life of Monk Sariputta, the right-hand follower of the Buddha (Pali: *cunda sūkarika*), paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 66 pages; BE 2548 (AD 2005).
- BAD-13-2-041: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, magic, auspicious moments, rituals and notes, paper manuscript; language: Pali, Lao and Lü; script: Tham Lü, Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 124 pages. CS 1276 (AD 1914).
- BAD-13-2-042: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, magic, auspicious moments and rituals, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 82 pages. CS 1286 (AD 1924).
- BAD-13-2-043: Untitled, related to astrology and auspicious moments, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 80 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-046: Untitled, related to magic and auspicious moments, Paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 88 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-048: Untitled, related to rituals, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 60 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-050: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, Palasük 9 (nine offences) and notes, paper manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao, Lao Buhan and Thai; 46 pages; CS 1239 (AD 1877).
- BAD-13-2-054: Untitled, related to astrology and magic, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao; 11 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-056: Untitled, related to removal of bad luck and auspicious moments, paper manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao and Tham Lü; 132 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-057: Untitled, related to astrology and auspicious moments, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Thai; script: Tham-Lao, Khòm and Thai; 34 pages; undated.
- BAD-13-2-058: Untitled, related to astrology and rituals, paper manuscript; language: Thai; script:

Khòm and Thai; 40 pages; undated.

BAD-13-2-059: Untitled, related to astrology, auspicious moments and traditional medicine, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 60 pages; undated

BAD-13-2-060: Untitled, related to traditional medicine, magic, removal of misfortune and auspicious moments, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao Tham-Lü and Lao Buhan; 73 pages; undated.

BAD-13-2-061: Untitled, related to auspicious moments and history of Prince Vessantara, paper manuscript; language: Lao and Pali; script: Tham-Lao and Tham Lü; 42 pages; undated.

BAD-13-2-063: Untitled, related to words and expressions of Myanmar and their correspondents in Khün, paper manuscript; language: Man (Myanmar) and Kuün; script: Myanmar and Khün; 88 pages; undated.

BAD-13-2-066: ພິກຂຸປາຕິໂມກ [Phikkhu Patimok, a set of 227 precepts for monks (Pali: *bhikkhu pātimokkha*)], paper manuscript; language: pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 81 pages; AD 1959.

BAD-13-2-069: [ສູດຖອດ], ລືກຍາມ, ຄາຖາອາຄົມ, ບົດສູດ ແລະບັນທຶກຕ່າງໆ [(Sut Thòt), auspicious moments, magic, chanting and notes], paper manuscript; language: Pali and Lao; script: Tham-Lao and Lao Buhan; 31 pages; CS 1268 (AD 1906), CS 1271 (AD 1909), CS 1275 (AD 1913), CS 1278 (AD 1916), CS 1281 (AD 1919), CS 1284 (AD 1922), CS 1287 (AD 1925).

## A.2 Official documents

BAD-12-2-1954.045: ໃບສາຍາ [Certificate of ordination]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated BE 2496 (AD 1953).

BAD-12-2-1955.136: ຈົດໝາຍສັງຄະນາຍົກ ປະທານປົກຄອງສິງເຖິງເຈົ້າຄະນະແຂວງ [Letter of the Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Council to the Monk Dean of the provinces]; signed by Pha Khu Khun Manivong, dated BE 2498 (AD 1955).

BAD-12-2-1956.005: ຄຳຕົກລົງແຕ່ງຕັ້ງຄະນະກຳມະການ ຮັບຜິດຊອບການບໍລິຈາກແຂວງຫຼວງພະບາງ [Letter of appointing the donation committee of Luang Prabang]; signed by Sadet Chao Khamtan Unkham, dated BE 2499 (AD 1956).

BAD-12-2-1957.015: ຈົດໝາຍສັງຄະນາຍົກ ປະທານປົກຄອງສິງເຖິງເຈົ້າຄະນະແຂວງ [Letter of the Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Council to the Monk Dean of the provinces]; signed by Pha Khu Khun Manivong, dated BE 2499 (AD 1956).

BAD-12-2-1958.005: ບັນທຶກການຄັດເລືອກເຈົ້າຄະນະເມືອງ ປາກທາ [The minutes of a meeting for the election of the chief monk of Pak Tha district]; signed by Pha Un et al, dated BE 2500 (AD 1958).

BAD-12-2-1959.048: ເຊີນອະນຸໂມທະນາບຸນມະຫາຊາດວັດແສນ [An invitation for Buddhist and lay people to attend the Vessantara Jataka festival to be held at Vat Saen]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated AD 1960, BE 2502.



- BAD-12-2-1960.215: ບັນຊີສຳມະໂນພະພິກຂະສາມະເນນ ວັດຫໍ່ສູງ [Census of monks and novices in Vat Hò Siang], year 2503 (AD 1960); unsigned and undated.
- BAD-12-2-1961.001: ຈົດໝາຍເຈົ້າຄະນະແຂວງເຖິງເຈົ້າຄະນະຕາແສງ ປາກແວດ [Letter of the Monk Dean of the province to chief-monks of Pak Vaet sub-districts]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated BE 2504 (AD 1961).
- BAD-12-2-1961.035: ບັນທຶກການປະຊຸມທີ່ປຶກສາພຸດທະສາສໜາ [The minutes of a meeting of the Buddhist Advisors]; signed by Chao Bun-òm Na Champasak, dated AD 1961, BE 2506.
- BAD-12-2-1962.008: ບັນທຶກການຄັດເລືອກເຈົ້າອະທິການວັດ ໃນເຂດຕາແສງຊຽງແມນ [The minutes of a meeting for the election of abbots of monasteries in Siang Maen sub-district]; signed by Pha Khameng Muthuchitto et al, dated BE 2504, AD 1962.
- BAD-12-2-1963.043: ຈົດໝາຍຫົວໜ້າໂຮງຮຽນພະປະລິຍັດຕິທຳຫຼວງພະບາງ ເຖິງເຈົ້າຄະນະຕາແສງເມືອງນານ [Letter of the Director of Buddhist Sangha schools of Luang Prabang to the chief-monk of Müang Nan sub-district]; signed by Pha Maha Anurat Anuratano, dated BE 2505, AD 1963.
- BAD-12-2-1964.040: ຈົດໝາຍຫົວໜ້າໂຮງຮຽນພະປະລິຍັດຕິທຳຫຼວງພະບາງ ຈະເລີນພອນລັດຖະມົນຕີກະຊວງທຳມະການ [Letter of the Director of Buddhist Sangha schools of Luang Prabang to the Minister of Religious Affairs]; signed by Pha Maha Anurat Anuratano, dated BE 2507, AD 1964.
- BAD-12-2-1965.009: ຕາຕັ້ງເຈົ້າອະທິການວັດບ້ານໂພນໄຊ [Credentials of an abbot of Phon Say monastery]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated BE 2508 (AD 1965).
- BAD-12-2-1966.026: ຈົດໝາຍຫົວໜ້າໂຮງຮຽນພະປະລິຍັດຕິທຳຫຼວງພະບາງ ເຖິງເຈົ້າຄະນະຕາແສງທຸກໆຕາແສງໃນເມືອງຫຼວງພະບາງ [Letter of the Director of Buddhist Sangha schools of Luang Prabang to chief-monks of sub-districts]; signed by Pha Maha Anurat Vatthanasintham, dated BE 2509, AD 1966.
- BAD-12-2-1967.100: ໃບແຈ້ງຂ່າວກຸສົນເຊີນສາທຸຊິນທັງຫຼາຍເຂົ້າຮ່ວມບຸນສະຫຼອງອາຄານຮຽນ ຂອງໂຮງຮຽນບ້ານຄົກນັນ [Invitation to all virtuous people to attend a celebration of the completion of a school building to be held at Ban Khok Nan (village)]; signed by Pha Thòngkhüm Khemakamo et al, dated BE 2509, AD 1967.
- BAD-12-2-1968.002: ໂອວາດຂອງພະລູກແກ້ວ ສີລະສັງວະລະ (ຄຳຝັນ) ກ່າວໄຂການສຳມະນາທີ່ວັດສີພຸດທະບາດ [Speech of Pha Luk Kaeo Silasangvaro (Khamfan) at the opening ceremony of a meeting held at Vat Si Phutthabat]; unsigned, dated BE 2511, AD 1968.
- BAD-12-2-1970.001: ໃບອະນຸຍາດບວດ [Permission for ordination]; signed by Pha Nya Bòlilak Lasakit (Bunhong Padichit), dated BE 2513, AD 1970.
- BAD-12-2-1971.019: ການຈົກສະຫຼາກຄາດຄູ່ເຮືອຊ່ວງ [Drawing of lots for racing boats]; signed by Phanya Anulak lasasena (Uan Sanit) and Phanya Bòlilak Lasakit (Bunhong Padichit), dated BE 2514, AD 1971.
- BAD-12-2-1972.001: ລາຍການບຸນສະເຫຼີມສະຫຼອງ ນະມັດສະການພະທາດສີທຳມະຫາຍໂສກ [Plan of the activities of the festival of celebration to worship to the stupa of Si Thamma Hai Sok]; signed by Phia Phiphitlotchana (Phia Mangkhala) and Pha Nya Bòlilak Lasakit (Bunhong Padichit), dated AD 1972, BE 2514.

- BAD-12-2-1976.006: ໃບຄໍາຮ້ອງຂໍລາສິກຂາ [Application for permission to leave monkhood]; signed by Pha Maha Bunpheng Vilathammo, dated BE 2519 (AD 1976).
- BAD-12-2-1977.001: ຈົດໝາຍສາທູໄຫຍ່ຄໍາຈັນ ເຖິງພະມະຫາຈັນເພັງ [Letter from Sathu Nyai Khamchan to Pha Maha Chanpheng]; dated 06.01.1977.
- BAD-12-2-1978.004: ບັນຊີສໍາມະໂນຄົວພະພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດພະບາດ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Pha Bat], BE 2521–22, AD 1978–79; signed by the abbot of Vat Pha Bat, dated 1978.
- BAD-12-2-1978.005: ບັນຊີສໍາມະໂນຄົວພະພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດໜອງສີຄູນເມືອງ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Nong Si Khun Müang], AD 1978–79, BE 2521–22; signed by Pha Phummi Phalappatto, dated 1978.
- BAD-12-2-1981.006: ຂໍ້ແນະນໍາວ່າດ້ວຍລະບຽບປົກຄອງສິງ [Instructions for monks and novices to follow the regulation on Sangha administration]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto; dated 1981.
- BAD-12-2-1982.002: ບັນທຶກການເລືອກຕັ້ງເຈົ້າຄະນະຕາແສງຄົກຕິມ [Minutes of a meeting for the election of a chief monk of Khok Tom sub-district]; signed by Pha Maha Niao Pasannachit et al, dated 1982.
- BAD-12-2-1983.001: ຈົດໝາຍສາທູໄຫຍ່ບຸນຈັນ ຖວາຍສາທູໄຫຍ່ຄໍາຈັນ [Letter from Sathu Nyai Bunchan to Sathu Nyai Khamchan]; dated 30.05.1983.
- BAD-12-2-1984.008: ສະຖິຕິລວມຍອດການປົກຄອງສິງ [Statistics of Sangha Administrators], year 1984; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1984.
- BAD-12-2-1984.005: ແຜນການກອງປະຊຸມບໍາລຸງຄູປະຖົມສຶກສາສິງໃນຍາມພັກແລ້ງ [Plan for a project for training the teachers of Sangha primary school of Luang Prabang]; school year 1983–84; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto and Bunchin Kaeomani, dated 1984.
- BAD-12-2-1984.009: ລາຍຊື່ກໍາມະການຮັບຜິດຊອບ ກອງປະຊຸມບໍາລຸງຄູປະຖົມສຶກສາສິງ [List of the members of the organizing committee for the project for training the teachers of Sangha primary school of Luang Prabang]; school year 1983–84; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto and Bunchin Kaeomani, dated 1984.
- BAD-12-2-1985.002: ຈົດໝາຍນໍາສົ່ງນັກຮຽນທີ່ຮຽນຈົບສ້າງຄູຂັ້ນຕົ້ນ, ຂັ້ນກາງ ແລະອຸດົມສຶກສາສິງ ອອກຮັບໃຊ້ວຽກງານ [Letter of transfer of students, who graduated from the Sangha primary and secondary teacher training schools, and Sangha secondary schools, to work]; signed by Pha Achan Phòng Samaloeok, Vice-President of LBFO; dated 1985.
- BAD-12-2-1985.007: ໃບອະນຸຍາດນໍາສິນຄ້າເຂົ້າ [Import license]; signed by Manola Phunsavat, dated 1985.
- BAD-12-2-1986.003: ຈົດໝາຍສາທູໄຫຍ່ຄໍາຈັນ ຈະເລີນພອນຄະນະອໍານວຍການພະແນກນໍ້າມັນເຊື້ອໄຟ [Letter from Sathu Nyai Khamchan to the Head of the petrol section]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachit, dated 1986.
- BAD-12-2-1987.010: ບັດນິມິນສູດຖອດພະຍາດ ແລະຕໍ່ອາຍຸ ຖວາຍສາທູໄຫຍ່ຄໍາຈັນ [Invitation to a chanting to remove disease and prolong the lifetime of Sathu Nyai Khamchan]; signed by Pha Bunchan Kaeo Phothichitto, dated 1987.

- BAD-12-2-1987.023: ຊີວະປະຫວັດຫຍໍ້ຂອງພະລູກແກ້ວ ສິລະສັງວະລະ (ຄຳຝັນ) [Biography of Pha Luk Kaeo Silasangvara (Khamfan)]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1987.
- BAD-12-2-1987.024: ສະຖິຕິພະເນນມາຈາກຕ່າງແຂວງ [Statistics of monks and novices who came from different provinces]; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1987.
- BAD-12-2-1990.028: ສຳມະໂນພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1990–91, BE 2533–34; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1990.
- BAD-12-2-1991.010: ສຳມະໂນພະພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1991–92, BE 2534–35; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1991.
- BAD-12-2-1992.001: ສຳມະໂນພະພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1992–93, BE 2535–36; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1992.
- BAD-12-2-1993.035: ສຳມະໂນພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1993–94, BE 2536–37; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1993.
- BAD-12-2-1994.021: ກ້ານນິມົນຮ່ວມບຸນອຸທິດໃຫ້ແດ່ ສາທູ່ໃຫຍ່ ຊາຍສະມຸດ ໂຊຕິໂກ [Letter of invitation to attend a ritual ceremony for merit-making in the name of Sathu Nyai Saisamut Sotiko]; signed by Pha Bunthan Punnyakamo, dated BE 2536, AD 1994.
- BAD-12-2-1995.021: ບັດເຊີນຮ່ວມບຸນເຂົ້າປະດັບດິນ [Letter of invitation to attend in a festival of Khao Padap Din]; signed by Saisamòn Khanthavong, dated BE 2538, AD 1995.
- BAD-12-2-1995.023: ບັນຊີສຳມະໂນພະພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices in Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1995; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1995.
- BAD-12-2-1996.011: ໃບແຈ້ງການບໍລິຈາກຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຜູ້ປະສົບໄພນ້ຳຖ້ວມຢູ່ໃນເຂດເມືອງງອຍ, ເມືອງນ້ຳບາກ ແລະ ເມືອງວຽງຄຳ [A formal notification on donation for people who suffered from flood in Müang Ngòi, Nam Bak and Viang Kham districts]; signed by Pha Ònta Kaeopannya, dated 1996.
- BAD-12-2-1996.014: ລາຍການເທດບຸນມະຫາຊາດປະຈຳປີທີ່ວັດປ່າໂພນເພົາ [Plan for the annual chanting of the Vessantara Jataka at Vat Phonphao]; signed by Pha Bunthan Punnyakamo, dated BE 2538, AD 1996.
- BAD-12-2-1996.019: ບັນຊີພະສົງ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1996; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1996.
- BAD-12-2-1997.011: ບັດນິມົນເຂົ້າຮ່ວມບຸນມະຫາຊາດ ທີ່ວັດພະທາດໂຄ່ງ “ສັນຕິເຈດີ” [Invitation to attend the Vessantara Jataka festival at Vat Khong stupa “Santi Chedi”]; signed by Sathu Bunthan Punnyakamo, dated BE 2539, AD 1997.
- BAD-12-2-1998.007: ບັນຊີສຳມະໂນພະສົງ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1998–99, BE 2541–42; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1998.

BAD-12-2-1999.019: ບັນຊີສຳມະໂນພິກຂຸ-ສາມະເນນ ວັດແສນສຸຂາລາມ [Census of monks and novices at Vat Saen Sukharam], AD 1999–2000, BE 2542–43; signed by Pha Khamchan Virachitto, dated 1999.

### A.3 Books, magazines and papers

BAD-01-0009: ແບບຮຽນໄວ ເຫຼັ້ມ ໑ ອັກສອນທຳ [Method of the reading practice of Tham–Lao script vol. 1] by Phanya Luang Maha Sena, Vientiane, undated.

BAD-01-0019: ປະເພນີລາວ [Lao custom] by Pha Maha Pan Athantho, Vientiane, BE 2511 (AD 1968).

BAD-01-0113: ສ່ວນຄົງເຫຼືອຂອງວາລະສານ ໂລກປັດຈຸບັນ [Fragment of the magazine *Lok Patchuban*]. No year and date of publication indicated.

BAD-01-0123: ຊີວະປະຫວັດຂອງສົມເດັດພະສັງຄະລາດທຳມະຍານະມະຫາເຖລະ [Biography of the supreme patriarch Thamma Nyana Maha Thera] unknown author, Vientiane, 1977.

BAD-02-0101: ປະຊຸມພິງສາວະດານ ເຫຼັ້ມ 2 [Collection of chronicles, vol. 2] by Krom Silpakòn, Bangkok, BE 2507 (AD 1964).

BAD-02-0102: ກອງປະຊຸມໃຫຍ່ຄັ້ງທີ 2 ຂອງແນວລາວສ້າງຊາດ [The second conference of the Lao Front for National Construction] by Khana Kammakan Neo Lao Sang Sat, Vientiane, 1987.

BAD-02-0103: ມໍລະດົກອັນລ້ຳຄ່າຂອງຫຼວງພະບາງ [Treasures of Luang Prabang] by Humphanh Rattanavong et al, Singapore, 2000.

BAD-02-0204: ພະອຸປະຄຸດເຖລະ [The Monk Uppakhut] by Sila Viravong, Vientiane, BE 2507 (AD 1964).

BAD-02-0205: ຂະໜົບທຳນຽມລາວ [Lao customs] by Lasabandit Sapha Lao, Vientiane, BE 2515 (AD 1972).

BAD-02-0232: ຄຳພີ ອານາຈັກແລະທຳມະຈັກ ແຫ່ງທຳມະສາດ: ກົດໝາຍບູຮານລາວ [Secular affairs and Buddhist doctrine in the ancient Lao law code] by Samlit Buasisavat, Vientiane, 1997.

BAD-02-0244: ທຳມະນູນປົກຄອງສົງຄາວ [The constitution of the Lao Sangha] by The Lao Front for National Construction, Vientiane, BE 2541 (AD 1998).

BAD-02-0378: ແບບຮຽນພາສາລາວ ຊັ້ນປະຖົມປີທີ 2 [Text book of the Lao language for second-year students of primary schools] by Pingkham Sisuvan et al, Vientiane, 1991.

BAD-02-0390: ສ່ວນຄົງເຫຼືອຂອງວິຊາເຄມີສາດ [Fragment related to chemistry] author, city and date are missing.

BAD-02-0393: ແປຄາຖາທຳມະບົດ [Dhammapada: Translated from the original Pali text] by Venerable Kantasila et al, Bangkok, BE 2533, AD 1990.

BAD-02-0447: ພຸດທະວົງ [Phutthavong] 1<sup>st</sup> year, vol. 3, Vientiane, BE 2502 (AD 1959).

BAD-02-0448: ພຸດທະວົງ [Phutthavong] 1<sup>st</sup> year, vol. 4, Vientiane, BE 2502 (AD 1959).

- BAD-02-0468: ພຸດທະວົງ [Phutthavong] 8<sup>th</sup> year, vol. 3, Vientiane, BE 2509–2510 (AD 1966).
- BAD-02-0469: ພຸດທະວົງ [Phutthavong] 8<sup>th</sup> year, vol. 5, Vientiane, BE 2509–2510 (AD 1966).
- BAD-02-0475: ID card of Mr. Khamphan; issued by Commissaire de Police à Luang Prabang, Luang Prabang, 1942.
- BAD-03-0001: ສິລະປະລາຍລາວບູຮານຫຼວງພະບາງ [The ancient arts of Luang Prabang] by National Institute for research Arts and Literature, Vientiane, 1988.
- BAD-04-0060: ຊີວະປະຫວັດຂອງ ສະເດັດເຈົ້າກົມມະແສງ ສຸວັນນະລາດ [Biography of Chao Kommasaeng Suvannalat] by Chao Khamman Vongkotlattana, Vientiane, 1960.
- BAD-04-0071: ອະນຸສອນວັດບຸບຜາວິປັດສະນາລາມ [Remembrance of Vat Buppha Vipassanalam] by Phanya Luang Sisonsai, unknown city, undated.
- BAD-05-0001: ພະລາຊະໂອງການວ່າດ້ວຍສະມະນະສັກ ແລະການເຖລາພິເສກ [Royal decree on monk's ranks and anointment] by Sisavangvong, Vientiane, 1951.
- BAD-05-0026: ພະລາຊະໂອງການແຕ່ງຕັ້ງລະບຽບສົງ ແຫ່ງພະລາຊະອານາຈັກລາວ [Royal decree on regulations for monks of the Kingdom of Laos] by Sisavangvong, Vientiane, 1959.
- BAD-05-0027: ຊີວະປະຫວັດເຈົ້າຄໍາພັນວົງກິດລັດຕະນະ [Biography of Chao Khamman Vongkotlattana] unknown author, Vientiane, 2509 (AD 1966).
- BAD-06-0002: ພູມິສາດ-ຊັ້ນພິໂຍສິກສາ [Geography for the second year of primary education] unknown author, Hanoi, 1940.
- BAD-06-0003: ໄວຍາກອນລາວ-ອັກຂະໜະວິທີ [Lao grammar – orthography] by Buddhist Institute of Vientiane, Vientiane, BE 2478, AD 1935.
- BAD-06-0004: ຕໍານານພະບາງ [The legend of the Pha Bang image] by Ministry of Religious Affairs (Buddhist Institute), Vientiane, 1952.

#### **A.4 Photographs**

- B2435R/Box B32: ຮູບສາທຸໃຫຍ່ບຸນຈັນ, ພະສົງ ແລະຍາດໂຍມຮ່ວມສູດສະຫຼອງວັນເກີດສາທຸໃຫຍ່ຄໍາຈັນຄົບຮອບ 64 ປີ [Sathu Nyai Bunchan, Monks and lay people chanted to celebrate the 64<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Sathu Nyai Khamchan], color, dated 1984.

## **B Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM)**

- 01-01-29-14-002-01: ລໍາພື້ນຊຸນບູລິມ Lam Phün Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 35 folios; CS 1252 (AD 1890).
- 06-01-03-13-201-03: ພື້ນພະແກ້ວພະບາງ Phün Pha Kaeo Pha Bang [The legend of Pha Kaeo-Pha Bang], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 42 folios; CS 1292 (AD 1930).

- 06-01-03-14-223-01: ນິທານຊຸນບູລິມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 114 folios; CS 1273 (AD 1911).
- 06-01-07-13-307-01: ນິໄສພະແຊກຄຳ, ພື້ນພະແກ້ວພະບາງ, ພື້ນພະບາງ Nisai Pha Saek Kham, Phün Pha Kaeo Pha Bang, Phün Pha Bang [Collection of legends of Pha Saek Kham, Pha Kaeo-Pha Bang, Pha Bang], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 84 folios; CS 1203 (AD 1841).
- 06-01-07-13-307-02: ພະບາງ Pha Bang [The legend of the Pha Bang image], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 58 folios; BE 2465 (AD 1922).
- 06-01-07-14-234-07: ຕຳນານຊຽງດົງຊຽງທອງ Tamnan Xiang Dong Xiang Thòng [A legend of Xiang Dong Xiang Thòng], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 58 folios; undated.
- 06-01-14-01-013-02: ອານິສົງຫ້າ ມາຕິກາແປດ Anisong Ha Matika Paet [The five *Anisong*, the eight *Matika*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 47 folios; undated.
- 06-01-14-09-011-01: ອານິສົງຫ້າ ມາຕິກາແປດ Anisong Ha Matika Paet [The Five *Anisong*, the Eight *Matika*], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 33 folios; undated.
- 06-01-14-13-018-00: ພະເຈົ້າລຽບໂລກ Pha Chao liap lok [The travels of the Buddha around the world], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 333 folios; undated.
- 06-01-14-13-019-00: ພະເຈົ້າລຽບໂລກ Pha Chao liap lok [The travels of the Buddha around the world], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 354 folios; undated.
- 06-01-14-13-025-01: ຕຳນານພະບາງ Tamnan Pha Bang [The legend of Pha Bang], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 25 folios; CS 1241 (AD 1879).
- 06-01-14-13-025-02: ພື້ນພະບາງ Phün Pha Bang [The legend of Pha Bang] palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 34 folios; CS 1227 (AD 1865).
- 06-01-14-14-001-11: ນິທານຊຸນບູລິມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 24 folios; CS 1235 (AD 1873).
- 06-01-18-14-114-13: ນິທານຊຸນບູລິມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 79 folios; undated.
- 06-01-23-14-005-01: ນິທານຊຸນບູລິມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 24 folios; undated.
- 06-01-24-14-099-02: ນິທານຊຸນບູລິມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 126 folios; undated.
- 01-01-29 14-002-01: ລຳພື້ນຊຸນບູລິມ Lam Phün Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 35 folios; CS 1252 (AD 1890).
- 06-01-85-14-001-00: ຕຳນານຊຸນບູລິມມະລາດ Tamnan Khun Burommalat [The legend of Khun Burom], paper manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 21 pages; undated.

06-01-85-14-001-02: ນິທານຂຸນບູລົມ Nithan Khun Burom [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Tham-Lao; 92 folios; CS 1272 (AD 1910).

06-01-85-14-001-03: ຂຸນບູລົມລາຊາ Khun Burom Rasa [The legend of Khun Burom], palm-leaf manuscript; language: Lao; script: Lao-Buhan; 7 folios; undated.

## C Publications

### C.1 In Lao and Thai languages

Buddhist Institute [Sila Vilavong, Maha] ພຸດທະບັນດິຕະສະພາຈັນທະບູລີ [ມະຫາ ສິລາ ວິລະວົງ]. 1935. ໄວຍາກອນລາວ [ພາກ] ໑ ອັກຂະໜະວິທີ [Lao grammar [part] 1: orthography]. Extrem Orient Press.

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## About the Author

Bounleuth Sengsoulin

Bounleuth Sengsoulin was born on 3 September 1959 at Ban Somsanuk (village), Pakkading district, Bolikhamxay province, Lao PDR. After he finished year 3 of primary school at his home village, he was ordained as a novice to continue his education. He left his village for Thakhaek district, the provincial capital of Khammuan province and finished primary education at a Sangha primary school in Thakhaek in 1972, finished secondary education at Buddhist Institute in Vientiane in 1978. Then, he disrobed and enrolled a student at the Pedagogical University of Vientiane (PUV) and graduated from PUV (BA degree) in 1982. In 2002, he left Laos for Germany to enrol as a student at the Institute for Ethnology, the University of Muenster (Westfälisch Wilhems-Universität Münster) and graduated (MA degree) from the university in 2004.

Bounleuth Sengsoulin was appointed a lecturer at the PUV on 1 October 1982 and he had worked for the university, which became the National University of Laos (NUOL) on 5 November 1996, until he came to work and study in Germany on 15 May 2011. Before he came to Germany, as a lecturer at the NUOL, he took part in many research teams, in particular, a committee for researching and compiling the Lao Grammar for General School, a committee for researching Lao literature in the era of political disintegration of the Lan Xang kingdom. He has been an author and a co-author of numerous books, mostly in Lao. Furthermore, he had been invited as a lecturer, a researcher, and a scholar to certain university in China, Japan, the USA, and Thailand.

Since 2011, he has been a student at the University of Hamburg (Universität Hamburg), Asia-Africa-Institute, Department of Language and Culture of Southeast Asia. He has been pursuing his doctorate in “Buddhist Monks and their Search for Knowledge: an examination of the personal collection of manuscripts of Phra Khamchan Virachitto (1920-2007), Abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam, Luang Prabang” at the university as a part of the project *The Lao Sangha and Modernity: Buddhist archive of Luang Prabang*, supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung).

## Zusammenfassung

Pha Khamchan Virachitto (Sathu Nyai Khamchan) wurde 1920 im Ortsteil Ban Lak Kham von Luang Prabang geboren. Er wurde 1934 als Novize ordiniert und verließ ein Jahr später seine Heimatstadt, um in Bangkok seine höheren buddhistischen Studien fortzusetzen. Im Jahre 1941 wurde er zum Abt des Klosters Vat Saen Sukharam ernannt und bekleidete bis zu seinem Tode im Jahre 2007 auch hohe Posten innerhalb des Provinz-Sangha. Bei seinem Tode fand man in seinen privaten Gemächern ein Korpus von 416 Manuskripten (330 Palmblatt- und 86 Papier-Manuskripte). Dieses Korpus bildet die Grundlage für die Untersuchung dieser Dissertation.

Die vorliegende Arbeit besteht aus sechs Kapiteln. Kapitel 2 gibt einen Überblick über die laotische Manuskriptkultur, ausgehend von Beobachtungen, die sich auf das Korpus der von Pha Khamchan privat genutzten Manuskripte gründen. Es werden Fragen wie Schreibmaterialien- und Schreibutensilien, Schriften, Sprachen, Herstellung und Klassifikation traditioneller Manuskripte erörtert. In den Hauptkapiteln 3 und 4 wird untersucht, wie die Aneignung traditionellen Wissens durch Pha Khamchan Virachitto und andere geistliche Würdenträger erfolgte, wobei aus konzeptionellen Gründen die Manuskripte eingeteilt wurden in solche, die religiöse Texte (kanonische Literatur wie auch Kommentarliteratur) und säkulare Texte (Bereichen Geschichte, Astrologie, Medizin, Magie, Philologie, Recht, Literatur und Gebräuche und Rituale) betreffen. Im Gegensatz zu den analysierten religiösen Manuskripten enthalten säkulare Manuskripte häufig verschiedene kurze Texte (multiple-text manuscript). Notizen und Textpassagen zu säkularen Themen finden sich manchmal auch in religiösen Texten; dementsprechend finden sich hier auch im vorherigen Teil analysierte Manuskripte wieder.

In Kapitel 5 (Modernität, die sich in Manuskripten widerspiegelt) wird untersucht, in welchem Umfange die modernen Printmedien die traditionelle Manuskriptkultur beeinflusst hat. Dies geschieht u.a. anhand einer Untersuchung von Manuskripten, die Anisong-Texte beinhalten. Die vorliegende Dissertation liefert einen Beitrag zur Entwicklung der laotischen Manuskriptkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts

## Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich versichere an Eides Statt durch meine eigene Unterschrift, dass ich die eingereichte Arbeit selbstständig und ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder annähernd wörtlich aus Veröffentlichungen entnommen sind, als solche kenntlich gemacht habe und mich auch keiner anderen als der angegebenen Literatur bedient habe. Diese Versicherung bezieht sich auch auf die in der Arbeit verwendeten Zeichnungen, Skizzen, bildlichen Darstellungen und dergleichen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized first name and a surname, followed by a long horizontal flourish.