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‘The (Dis)appearance of an Author’
Some Observations and Reflections
on Authorship in Modern Thai Buddhism¹

Martin Seeger

That authorship is extremely difficult to determine in premodern Southeast Asia is well known. The fact that writers not only avoided (often) mentioning their name but often took the names of their teachers or famous teachers in the distant past (...) further compounds this difficulty... Ownership of ideas was simply not as strong of a concept before print culture (and if one reads the published religious works in Thailand and Laos today, it quickly becomes evident that citations are few and far between, that often authors completely copy or plagiarize previous writers’ work, and that many other texts are written by a

¹ I would like to thank Naris Charaschanyawong, who has helped me to get hold of a number of sources relevant for this article. In addition, he has given valuable comments on previous drafts of this paper and was my co-researcher on the research I have done on Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan (Seeger and Naris 2013a/b [2556a/b]). I also very much would like to thank Than Mae Chi Vimuttiyā for her many most interesting and valuable comments on Khunying Yai’s literary work. In addition, I would like to thank Lance Cousins, Justin McDaniel, Victor King, Robin Moore, Adcharawan Seeger and Frances Weightman for their valuable comments on this paper. I am also very grateful to Khun Prasop Wisetsiri, the adopted son of Khunying Yai, for his most generous support and his patience with my many questions. I wish to thank The British Academy for a grant that allowed me to do research on the life of Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan and the authorship of the text *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti*. I also wish to thank the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS), University of Leeds, for providing me with a grant that allowed me to conduct additional interviews in Thailand. I would like to thank the National Research Council in Thailand for permission to conduct fieldwork in Thailand. I have used my own standardized phoneticization of Thai script except in cases where the author’s or person’s name mentioned in this paper have an established way of transliteration. Throughout this paper, Pali and Thai words are italicized. The translations from Thai are my own unless stated otherwise.

group or dedicated to an abbot who may have had little to do with the actual writing)... To situate oneself in a teaching lineage was a much stronger motivation than it was to claim creative skills as an individual author. The monk as a teacher is particularly honored and is considered to be a representative of the Buddha.²

Even though legal protection of intellectual property is a relatively new phenomenon in Thailand and originated as a concept in the West, an anonymous author has argued that the practice of protecting ‘intellectual property’ has been in existence in Thailand since premodern times:

this can be seen in the traditional practices of teachers of various schools, such as Thai local medical schools [*samnak mo ya phuen ban thai*] that implemented methods of protecting knowledge by transmitting it only within their own lineage of students or group (this approach is also an important reason as to why various areas of Thai knowledge disappeared as it was dependent on individuals).³

This same author further stated that it may be argued that the legal protection of intellectual property and these Thai traditional practices of exclusive transmission of knowledge within school lineages⁴ are “concepts in discrepancy with Buddhist principles.”⁵ By referring to the *Saṅgītisutta* (DN III 232), s/he explains that to be possessive of and unwilling to share (*huang*) one’s knowledge may constitute two of the five *macchariyas*, i.e. *dhammamacchhariya* (selfishness with regard to the *Dhamma*) and *lābhamacchhariya* (selfishness with regard to one’s possessions), and thus is a mental defilement (*kilesa*). This, however, s/he argues does not imply that canonical Buddhism would not value ‘intellectual property.’ For him/her, infringement of intellectual property is ‘taking what was

² McDaniel 2008: 180.

³ <http://www.gotoknow.org/posts/436132>, last visited 10/02/2015.

⁴ Chetana Nagavajara writes that this “traditional practice of hoarding knowledge to oneself and one’s innermost circle, [is] known in Thai as ‘huang wicha.’ It was reported that in order to be able to extort medicinal prescriptions from certain medicine men, His Majesty [Rama III] had to exert his royal authority in some decidedly authoritarian ways.” (Chetana 1994: 22)

⁵ <http://www.gotoknow.org/posts/436132>, last visited 10/02/2015.

not given' and thus wrongful according to the five *sīlas*. S/he concludes that

From a Buddhist perspective, even though it looks as if strict adherence to intellectual property protection is in discrepancy with Buddhist principles that teach generosity and non-possessive dissemination of knowledge (*vatthudāna* [the giving of material things], *dhammadāna* [the giving of the *Dhamma*]), Buddhism also teaches to respect and give importance to holders of intellectual property.⁶

The Thai Buddhist Studies scholar Phrakhrusangkharak Amnat (Yodthong) provides another interesting interpretation of canonical Buddhism with regard to 'intellectual property:'

when looked at from an ultimate level [of truth; *paramattha*] the *Dhamma* belongs to nature and cannot be owned by anybody; on a conventional level, however, as a consequence of the fact that he was the first to become awakened and to discover the *Dhamma*, the Buddha is the owner of the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*. The protection of the *Dhammavinaya* is similar to modern-day protection of intellectual property and can become an issue when someone teaches the Buddha's teaching and declares it as his own ideas. The Buddha calls such a person a 'great robber' [*mahācora*]. This right is nowadays called moral right.⁷

Concepts and ideas of authorship in relation to Buddhism have, however, not only been discussed on a purely theoretical level but also in connection with, and as a result of, events that hugely upset large parts of the Thai Buddhist community: In the mid-1990s, the Thai 'superstar' monk Phra Yantra (Amaro) had been accused of having committed the *pārājika* offence of sexual intercourse as several women claimed that he had had sexual relationships with them. After numerous headlines, the Thai Saṅgha Supreme Council (Mahatherasamakhom) finally decided that Phra Yantra must disrobe as a consequence of his violation of his monastic vow of sexual abstinence.⁸ These events and revelations together with Phra Yantra's flight from prosecution to America, where he was granted

⁶ <http://www.gotoknow.org/posts/436132>, last visited 10/02/2015.

⁷ Amnat 2010 [2553]: 329–330. See Vin III 89; Sp II 483f.

⁸ See e.g. Keyes 1999: 126–129.

political asylum, caused a lot of dismay, frustration, disappointment and anger amongst Thai Buddhists.⁹ What was not as widely reported on as the accusations of sexual misconduct, however, and what is of interest for this article is that it was also debated as to whether Phra Yantra had violated another *pārājika* rule, namely that against stealing. For Phra Yantra was also accused of having plagiarised Buddhist literary work by Rawi Bhavilai, a renowned Thai professor of astronomy. Until then, no Thai monk had ever been accused of having violated copyright law; thus there was no precedence for this. In 1994, the renowned Thai Buddhist Studies scholar Sathianphong Wannapok reported that when a reporter asked a high-ranking and influential monk (*phra racha khana phu yai*) if Phra Yantra's plagiarism constituted a *pārājika* offence, the monk replied (in the words of Sathianphong) that

copying and disseminating [Buddhist ideas] is just like quoting the teaching of the Buddha when preaching to the public. How can this be regarded as being the ideas of the one who gives [Buddhist] teachings? It all belongs to the Buddha! Thus, it can be done. I can't see any wrong-doing here.¹⁰

These arguments and cultural practices point to complexities of concepts on authorship in Thai Buddhism and strongly invite an analysis and deconstruction of ideas of 'authorship' as a clear-cut category. It is of course widely known that there is the ideology within the textual tradition of Theravada Buddhism to avoid innovation and production of new meaning, while the main objective or concern is the faithful reproduction or preservation of what is believed to be authentic, original meaning.¹¹ This has also become apparent by the examples given above.

What does it mean when a modern Thai Buddhist text is ascribed to an 'author'? 'Author' can be translated into Thai in various ways, all with slightly different, but often overlapping and blurred connotations. Thus, an author of a Buddhist text may be called *phu taeng*, *phu khian* or *phu riap-riang*. While *phu* [person]

⁹ See e.g. Kunlathida Samaphutthi and Wanchai Tantiwitthayaphithak 2000.

¹⁰ Sathianphong Wannapok 1994 [2537]: 108.

¹¹ See e.g. Seeger 2005, and Seeger 2011.

taeng may imply some degree of originality in the text, *phu khian* emphasizes the act of writing (*khian*). *Phu riap-riang*, is literally “someone who compiles” or reorganises a text. The content of the text, however, is not seen as the result of original thinking on the part of the *phu riap-riang*. This latter term is often used in Thai Buddhist literature, even when the ‘author’ is a biographer who bases his account on his own memories of the person whose life he writes about.¹² In order to explore conceptions of authorship in the context of modern (Theravada) Buddhist literature in some depth, in the following investigation I will focus on the history of three Thai Buddhist texts, all of which have widely been regarded as outstanding and profound pieces of Thai Buddhist literature.

These texts are: 1. *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* (Practice in Perfect Conformity with the *Dhamma*), whose authorship has been attributed to Luang Pu Man Bhūridatto (1870–1949), the founder of the Thai Forest Tradition, but was, in fact, as recent research demonstrated (see below), authored by the female Buddhist practitioner Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan (1886–1944); 2. *Muttodaya* by Luang Pu Man Bhūridatto; and 3. *Buddhadhamma* written by the famous scholar monk Phra Payutto (1939–). The aim is to introduce briefly the history and background of these texts in order to identify not only ideas on ‘authorship’ that their ‘authors’ (may) have had but also how their ‘authorship’ has been perceived and understood by Thai Buddhists. Since only one of these three ‘authors’ discussed, i.e. Phra Payutto, has been explicitly, and in some detail, discussing concepts of Buddhist authorship, necessarily some of what will be presented below is based on inferences based on historical contextualisation and comments made by disciples (in the case of Luang Pu Man) and other people who were

¹² On the inner front page of a biography of Luang Pu Man e.g. (see below) it reads *riap-riang doi* (*doi* means “by”) Luang Pho Wiriyang (Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]). Throughout the book, however, Luang Pho Wiriyang refers to himself as *Phu khian*. See also Bunruean Tongbuntoem 1985 [2528]: 8/9; here the author’s work is described as to “compile [*riap-riang*] the *Dhamma*.” The book, however, is clearly not just citing Buddhist teaching from other scriptures but constitutes Khun Mae Bunruean’s own words and comments on the *Dhamma* she discusses.

close to them (as in the case of Khunying Yai). This means that, to some extent, my arguments will be based on inferences about their authorial intentions made on the basis of my study of biographical data, gained from biographies and my interviews with a number of key-informants. In my study of the history of these three texts I will investigate the paradoxes that result from the Buddhist authors' motivation to disappear as an author, i.e. as an originator or creator of new meaning, in order to gain authority for their texts. If deemed successful, the disappearance of the author will not only increase the status of the texts but also, paradoxically, of the author him/herself.

Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti

Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti consists of five sections, all of which are dialogues. These five dialogical texts were first published during the first half of the 1930s and have been republished over the last 70 years under different titles and been reprinted in various editions.¹³ Over the years probably more than 100,000 hard copies altogether have been produced and widely disseminated (often for free distribution). Some of these publications include only one or two of the five texts that constitute *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti*. In addition to this, the texts have been disseminated online in the form of an e-book,¹⁴ on various Buddhist blogs¹⁵ or on Facebook.¹⁶

The text itself does not specify who is involved in these conversations; only letters from the Thai alphabet are used as abbreviations in order to indicate that two people take part in these dialogues. It needs to be pointed out, however, that based on the style of language it is very unlikely that these dialogues actually ever

¹³ Another title under which these texts have been published is *Achieving Awakening within Seven Days* (Praphot Setthakanon [no date]).

¹⁴ See e.g. <http://www.kanlayanatam.com/Mybookneanam/book106.htm>, last visited 10/02/2015.

¹⁵ See e.g. <http://pantip.com/topic/30394744>, last visited 10/02/2015.

¹⁶ See e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/Buddhism2Science/posts/496897813704643>, last visited 10/02/2015.

happened, at least not in exactly this form: the language clearly is written language.¹⁷ The topics discussed in these texts cover a wide range of Buddhist teachings and demonstrate that its author must have had a close and comprehensive familiarity with the Pali canon and Abhidhammic teachings. In particular the 10 *saṃyojanas* (the fetters that bind human beings to rebirth) and the various kinds of awakened person (*ariyapuggala*) are frequently discussed and referred to. One of the outstanding features of these texts is that the author consistently and very precisely refers to Pali canonical scriptures.¹⁸ This fact makes these texts particularly remarkable, when taking into account the relatively limited number of systematic manuals and reference books on Buddhist doctrine at that time. In fact, at that time there existed only one printed edition of the Pali canon, i.e. the Pali version in Thai script printed between 1888 and 1893 as part of the celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rama V's ascension to the throne (however, only 39 out of the 45 volumes were printed for this edition).¹⁹ No Thai translation of the complete Pali canon was available.²⁰ In addition, the precise referencing to canonical and post-canonical teachings, concepts and narratives was and still is a very exceptional practice, as the vast majority of Thai books on the *Dhamma* lack this feature. However, even though the texts demonstrate a profound scholarship, they also make clear at the same time that its author did not only engage very intensively with Buddhist teaching on an intellectual level (*pariyatti*) but must also have had access to deep experiences in the practice of the *Dhamma* (*paṭipatti*). This becomes particularly clear when considering the Thai translations of Pali technical terms. Here, we can observe that the translations given seem to be based on personal insights and experience rather than on translations typically offered in

¹⁷ Cf. interview with Mae Chi Vimuttiyā on 13/11/2013.

¹⁸ Cf. interview with Mae Chi Vimuttiyā on 13/11/2013.

¹⁹ The complete set of 45 volumes was printed only during the reign of Rama VII (r. 1925–1935) between 1925 and 1930.

²⁰ There were of course Thai translations of parts of the Pali canon available. Translating Pali texts into Thai has had a long tradition in Thai history, but the first complete Thai translation of the Pali canon was published only in 1957.

dictionaries.²¹ The sentence structures used are rather simple, short, and not academic at all; in terms of style they are similar to sermon texts by monks of the Thai forest tradition.²² In many text editions, it is mentioned that these five dialogical texts were first published between 1932 and 1934 (see below).

To a large extent the dialogues consist of rather short questions and answers to these questions, some of which are more than a page long. This method of teaching the *Dhamma* is not unusual in the Thai context as teaching Buddhist doctrine in the form of questions and answers, *pucchāvissajjanā*, is a widespread and popular didactic method of teaching the *Dhamma* in Thailand. There also exist numerous texts by influential monks of the same (and later) time period that use the method of *pucchāvissajjanā*.²³ In fact, this way of teaching is believed to go back to the Buddha himself, who often used questions and dialogues in order to build up understanding of and confidence (*saddhā*) in his teachings.²⁴

The original five texts that now constitute *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* were published without any author mentioned, as have a

²¹ Cf. interview with Mae Chi Vimuttiyā on 13/11/2013.

²² Cf. also interview with Mae Chi Vimuttiyā on 13/11/2013.

²³ See e.g. texts by the famous monks Chao Khun Upali Guṇūpamācariya (Jan Siricando) of Wat Boromniwat and Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Nāṇavaro of Wat Thepsirin.

²⁴ Payutto 1998 [2541]: 46. The *Milindapañha*, which contains the dialogues between the Buddhist monk Nāgasena and the Indo-Greek king Menandros (2nd century BC), is a famous example for *pucchāvissajjanā* in the Theravada tradition. In Thailand, similarly to *Milindapañha*, the *Anthology of Royal Questions (Prachum Ratchaputcha)* contains the questions that Thai kings or princes asked high ranking monks about Buddhist teaching and practice who then provided answers to these questions. The Thai historian Prince Damrong Ratchanuphap argued some 100 years ago that there is no other country that possesses texts similar to *Prachum Ratchaputcha* (apart from *Milindapañha* of course); see Damrong Ratchanuphap 1970 [2513]: (1). In the canonical Abhidhamma various texts give a series of questions followed by a series of answers e.g. the *Yamaka*, the *Paṭṭhāna* and in a slightly different way the *Kathāvatthu*. There are also numerous *suttas* that consist of questions and answers. (I thank Lance Cousins for making me aware of this). See also Pisit Kobbun 2005.

number of later editions of these texts. However over the last twenty years or so, but there is the possibility that some 45 years ago, there were various editions of either the complete set of the five texts or of individual texts that referred to either Luang Pu Man Bhūridatto or one of his most famous disciples, Luang Pho Li Dhammadhāro (1907–1961), as author of these texts. Thus, in an edition of 2008, which contains *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā*, one and probably the most famous of the five texts, it is explained that this text is a dialogue between Phra Dhammajedi (1888–1962) who asks questions (*tham*) and Luang Pu Man, his teacher, who responds (*top*) to these questions. The book cover features portraits of both of these highly influential and revered monks of 20th century Thai Buddhism. This edition also includes a short section of *Muttodaya*, a text by Luang Pu Man, which I will discuss later.

A different understanding of the authorship of this text is found in an edition printed in 2007, which contains all five texts. In the foreword of this edition it reads: “This book *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* is a valuable compilation of *pucchāvissajjanā* by Pho Mae Khruba Ajarn [literally: Father-Mother-Teacher].”²⁵ In contrast to the aforementioned edition it does, however, not mention (explicitly) Luang Pu Man as the author. It is of course widely known that his monastic disciples (*sit phra nen*) called Luang Pu Man with highest respect “Pho Mae Khruba Ajarn.”²⁶ Also, this edition too carries portraits of Luang Pu Man and Phra Dhammajedi on its cover suggesting that this book contains their conversations. However, in an edition of 2002, which contains all five texts and had an impression of 12,000 copies, it is stated at the end of the book that

According to evidence which was examined by numerous knowledgeable people it is believed that [*Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti*] contains the dialogues on questions on the *Dhamma*, by a prominent monastic member of the Dhammayuttika congregation and Luang Pu Man...

²⁵ [No author mentioned] 2007 [2550]: [foreword]. It has been argued that the Thai word *Khruba Ajarn* may come from a combination of the Pali words *guru* (teacher) and *pācariya* (teacher’s teacher). *Khruba* is usually used to express respect to a highly regarded charismatic monk (see Isara Treesahakiat 2011: 7–10).

²⁶ See e.g. Wirasak Jansongsaeng 2010 [2553]: 51.

The first edition of this text ... had been distributed at the funeral of Luang Pu Man on 31 January 1950.²⁷

Whereas this edition does not reveal the identity of the person who asked the questions, in the foreword of an edition of 2012, which contains both *Muttodaya* and *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā*, it reads that

As for *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* there is no evidence as to who wrote down this text. But according to its original content ‘there is evidence in the original edition that [explains] that Phra Dhammajedi (Jum Bandhulo) of Wat Phothisomphorn ... in Udon Thani is the one who asked questions [*pucchā*], to which Luang Pu Man Bhūridatto gave the answers [*vissajjanā*].’²⁸

In contrast to this, an edition of 2007, published by the monastic community of the important Bangkok monastery Wat Samphanthawong says in the foreword: “according to evidence recorded in this book Phra Dhammajedi (Jum Bandhulo) is the questioner and Luang Pu Man is the respondent. Both questioner and respondent have passed away. Whatever the facts are, it is a matter of the past.”²⁹ Here obviously the attribution of authorship has been done more carefully; nonetheless the publisher of the 2008 edition, which is a reprint of the 2007 edition, decided to name both monks as authors on the book cover.³⁰ At the moment, it is not clear exactly how and when authorship of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts was ascribed to Luang Pu Man.³¹ According to the three most authoritative biographies of

²⁷ Phra Ajarn Man Bhūridattathera 2002 [2545]: 108. This claim that the five texts were distributed at Luang Pu Man’s cremation is also made in an edition of 2000 (*Jittaphawana moradok lam kha thang phutthasatsana* 2000 [2543]: 148).

²⁸ Luang Pu Man Bhūridattathera 2012 [2555]: 4.

²⁹ See Phra Dhammajedi and Luang Pu Man Bhūridattathera 2008 [2551]: [foreword].

³⁰ See <http://portal.in.th/i-dhamma/pages/11697/>, last visited 22/11/2013. I have not been able to get hold of the 2007 edition.

³¹ The earliest example for this attribution of authorship that I was able to find so far is from the year 1996. Here, *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* has been published under the title *A Valuable Dhamma Book: paṭipattipucchāvis-*

him,³² he never claimed to have written the book/texts (at least, there is no indication in these biographies that would justify such an attribution of authorship). In fact, we know of only one text that is believed to have been written by Luang Pu Man. This text, *Khantawimutisamangkithamma*, is said to have been written by Luang Pu Man in 1928 when he was residing in the Bangkok monastery Wat Sapathum. *Khantawimutisamangkithamma* is a rather short text and in terms of style and content rather different from any of the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts. *Khantawimutisamangkithamma* consists, however, to some extent also of questions and answers. In fact one of his main biographers wrote that Luang Pu Man's sermons were written down for the first time only in the early 1940s, in or after 1942.³³ Another biography, however, states that Luang Pu Man's *Dhamma* teachings were first written down by one of his most famous disciples, Luang Pu Lui (Candasāro) in 1940.³⁴ Be this as it may, since the earliest of the five texts of *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* was already published in 1932, and the last in 1934, both of these statements would rule out Luang Pu Man as author of these texts. In addition, in the cremation book of Luang Pu Man, printed in 1950, the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts are not mentioned at all, whereas all other available texts by him were printed in this book.³⁵ In fact, in the foreword written by Phra Dhammajedi (!), we can read that one of the objectives of the cremation book was to "compile [his] *Dhamma* sermons that have been recorded by his close disciples... [and all] existing written works and *Dhamma* sermons which [Luang Pu Man] has given to us as legacy."³⁶ In

sajjanā. The book cover informs that Phra Dhammajedi is asking the questions and Luang Pu Man gives the answers (Dhammajedi and Phra Ajan Man 1996 [2539]). Unfortunately there is no foreword or preface.

³² Bua 1998 [2541]; Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]; Thongkham 2009 [2552].

³³ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 69–71; see also below.

³⁴ This is a very short text that consists of 23 "topics" (*hua kho*). Wirasak Jansongsaeng 2010 [2553]: 45.

³⁵ Cremation Book of Phra Ajarn Man Bhūridatto 31 January 1950 [2493].

³⁶ Cremation Book of Phra Ajarn Man Bhūridatto 31 January 1950 [2493]: [First page].

addition, a careful reading of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts shows that the language used is very unlikely to be the language male monastics (*phra*) would use in a conversation. Even though the language does not allow us to conclude whether the person involved in these ‘dialogues’ is male or female, it seems to be quite clear that lay people are conversing with each other. One of the five texts for example starts with the following sentence “On the observance day [*wan phra*] Ph. and M. go to the monastery [*wat*] to observe the eight precepts [*raksa ubosot*].”³⁷ Given that they follow 227 monastic rules, it is extremely unlikely that monks would use the phrase “observe the eight precepts” in this context, which is, however, typically used by/for laypersons. Another example for this can be found at the beginning of another of the five texts: here the dialogue starts with the question “What religion do you profess [*than naphue satsana arai*]?”³⁸ and the answer “I believe [*naphue*] in Buddhism.” Again, it seems to be extremely unlikely that two Thai Buddhist monks would start off their conversation in this way.

This evidence taken together should make it clear that the attribution of authorship of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts to Luang Pu Man is not sustainable. However, what makes this attribution even more confusing, but also at the same time even more untenable, is the fact that there is at least one edition (printed in 2002)³⁹ in which *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* together with one other

³⁷ Khunying Yai 1933a [2476a]: 1.

³⁸ Khunying Yai 1932b [2475b]: 1. For more examples: see Seeger and Naris 2013a [2556a]: 164.

³⁹ This text was published under the title “*pucchāvissajjanā* on the *Dhamma* Practice” (Li 2002 [2545]). In the foreword to this edition, it is stated that this edition is based on the third edition of a book with the same title, printed in 1968. I have not yet been able to find a copy of this 1968 edition or earlier editions. There are, however, some more recent books in which the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts have been printed together with a text by Luang Pho Li (see e.g. Praphot Sethakanon [no date]). In these editions it is not claimed that Luang Pho Li was also the author of the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts. Thus, it may be possible that the attribution of authorship of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts may have occurred because of confusion, as people may have mistakenly concluded that

of the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts has been attributed to Luang Pho Li Dhammdharo. In the foreword of this edition, it is explained that these two texts were taken from the third edition of the *pucchāvissajjanā* text collection, printed in 1968, which contained all the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts. This 1968 edition is attributed to Luang Pho Li. In Luang Pho Li's autobiography, however, none of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts are mentioned and according to his biography it is extremely unlikely that he is the author of these texts.⁴⁰

The first editions of the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts are nowadays extremely hard to find. The National Library of Thailand holds only one copy each of two of the five texts. Only an estimated number of 1,000–2,000 copies of each of these first editions were made and distributed to monasteries for free. As already mentioned none of them carries the name of an author. Also, apart from *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* none of these first editions contains a preface or foreword (see below). The first editions are 1. *paṭipattivibhāga* (first published in 1932),⁴¹ 2. *paṭipattinidesa* (first published in 1932),⁴² 3. *paṭipattivibhaṅga* (first published in 1933),⁴³ 4. *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* (first published in 1933),⁴⁴ and 5. *paṭipattivibhajana* (first published in 1934).⁴⁵

I had been of the view that these texts were authored by Luang Pu Man for many years, when my Thai friend and, subsequently also co-researcher on this research project, Naris Charaschanyawong told me in 2011 that something does not add up with these texts and that a woman may have written them. Together we then pursued systematic research into the history of these texts. In the course of

Luang Pho Li is the author of *all* texts included in the volume. It is of course also not clear as to why the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts have been printed together with a text of Luang Pho Li in the first instance.

⁴⁰ Sutthithamrangsikhampiramethajan [no date].

⁴¹ Khunying Yai 1932a [2475a].

⁴² Khunying Yai 1932b [2475b].

⁴³ Khunying Yai 1933a [2476a].

⁴⁴ Khunying Yai 1933b [2476b].

⁴⁵ Khunying Yai 1934 [2477].

this research we found in the preface of the book *Tat buang kam* (*Cutting the Karmic Fetters*), written by Prasop Wisetsiri during his time as a monk, and printed in 1984, the following passage:

There are people with a mind confident in the *Dhamma*, who have printed and disseminated the texts that my mother wrote [*khian*]. This is a most meritorious thing to do. However, it is regrettable and sad that those who printed these texts for distribution did not mention my mother's name [as author] so that [these texts can] serve as commemoration and give credit for her literary work. Thus, if anybody has the intention to print these texts for circulation in the future, which is a meritorious act in itself, I would like to ask for the author's name [*phu khian*] to be added too: my mother Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan. Mentioning her as [author] will pay homage to the writer who has already passed away.⁴⁶

Tat buang kam also contains all the five *Dhammānudhammapaṭi-patti* texts together with some poems, also authored by Khunying Yai. Spurred by Khun Prasop's reference to his mother, we have since been trying to find out more about the life of Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan, a wealthy woman born into the nobility and married to a famous judge, who also carried a noble title.⁴⁷ Despite her elevated social position, there is a scarcity of biographical sources. This and the fact that she died 70 years ago, made the reconstruction of her life and the history of her texts a rather challenging task. Even though we have found some short references in biographies of some prominent monks and other historical sources, the major part of the data that allowed us to reconstruct her biography has necessarily had to derive from the memory of our interviewees who knew her personally.⁴⁸ Apart from Khun Prasop's book we have found only one

⁴⁶ Prasop and Khunying Yai Damrongthammasan 1984 [2527]: [introduction].

⁴⁷ For more details on her life and the latest stage of our research on her see Seeger and Naris 2556a/b [2013a/b]. At the moment Naris and I are working on a book with the title *pucchā-vissajjanā wa duai kan patibat tham* (*pucchā-vissajjanā on the practice of Dhamma*) that will contain all her texts and a detailed biography of her.

⁴⁸ So far we have been able to interview four of her contemporaries who have provided us with relevant information on her biography. In particular the repeated in-depth interviews with her 90 year old adopted son Khun Prasop Wisetsiri have been extremely valuable here (see footnote 56). We have also

other written source that seems to give direct evidence for Khunying Yai's authorship of at least one of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* texts. In his autobiography *Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu* (1906–1993) refers to her as the author of *putchawipatsana*⁴⁹ when he remembers his conversation with the eminent monk and abbot of the Royal Monastery Wat Thepsirin, Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Nāṇavaro (1872–1951), who was Khunying Yai's major teacher.⁵⁰ In addition, during the course of our research we were able to find out that in 1931 Khunying Yai won the first prize of a writing competition for which people were asked to submit answers to “Eight Questions on the *Dhamma*” (*Aṭṭhadhammapañha*)⁵¹ in the form of short essays.⁵² Prince Krom Muen Wiwitwanpricha, a son of Rama IV and himself an author of texts on Buddhism, decided that Khunying Yai submitted the best answers, on the level of ‘*Ek-U*.’ The expression ‘*Ek-U*’ probably derives from the Pali words *eka* (one) and *uttama* (highest, best) and may be translated as the “Most Excellent One.”⁵³ The answers she provided lend further compelling, if not conclusive, evidence to the fact that Khunying Yai must be the real author of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* texts: her

interviewed people whose parents or grandparents have been contemporaries of Khunying Yai.

⁴⁹ This clearly seems to be a misspelling and should read *putchawisatchana*, i.e. *pucchāvissajjanā*.

⁵⁰ *Buddhadāsa* 1992 [2535]: 385. During the process of publishing this paper, we also found a copy of the official history of the monastery Wat Thammikaram (it has been rather difficult to get hold of it as there are not many copies left) from the year 1994 (Somphong Suthinsak 1994 [2537]). Here, *paṭṭipattivibhāga* and *paṭṭipattivibhaṅga* have been published, both texts' authorship being clearly ascribed to Khunying Yai. However, it is also said that these two texts were taken from Khun Prasop's edition *Tat buang kam* of 1984. As both texts, Khun Prasop's *Tat buang kam* and the official history of Wat Thammikaram, were not widely disseminated and are nowadays difficult to find, they have not had any major impact so far on the attribution of authorship of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* texts, as described above.

⁵¹ *Aṭṭhadhammapañha* is the title of the book in which the best essays of this writing competition were published.

⁵² For more details on this competition see Seeger and Naris 2013b [2556b].

⁵³ Khunying Yai also received a silver cup.

answers in *Aṭṭhadhammapañha*⁵⁴ were published one year before the publication of the first of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts; they incorporate numerous idiosyncratic text passages that are similar or identical in terms of wording, topic, conceptual explanations and style to passages in the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts to such an extent that coincidence or borrowing of commonly known stock phrases of that time can definitely be ruled out.⁵⁵ What makes Khunying Yai's authorship also very interesting is that, according to her adopted son, Khun Prasop,⁵⁶ she did not write down the texts herself but had a servant note down what she had recited. Given the complexity of the textual structure and content, the numerous quotations in Pali and the many references to Pali canonical scriptures, this mode of text production necessarily assumes advanced skills in orality and memory.⁵⁷

However, the reason or reasons as to why Khunying Yai decided to omit her name from the first editions might never be known. The wish to remain anonymous in this respect seems to be surprising.

⁵⁴ Cremation Book of Noi Paurohit 26 November 1931 [2474] (1): 1–10.

⁵⁵ See Seeger and Naris 2013b [2556b]; cf. also interview with Mae Chi Vimuttiyā on 13/11/2013. The fact that Khunying Yai wrote the preface of *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā* in its first edition adds additional weight to our argument that she is the real author of these texts. In this preface, however, she does not refer to herself as 'author' but as the one who had this text "published" (*dai phim khuen*); see below.

⁵⁶ Khun Prasop Wisetsiri was the son of Khunying Yai's husband, Phra Ya Damrongthammasan, with another wife, but Khunying Yai brought him up since birth.

⁵⁷ We do know that at Khunying Yai's time it was not unusual for people to possess extraordinary memories and be able to recite very large repertoires of texts. Chetana Nagavajara e.g. reports how his grandmother was able to recite works of Thai literature continuously for a few hours (Chetana Nagavajara 1994: 33). Khun Noi Paurohit (1848–1931), a contemporary of Khunying Yai and probably known by her, was able to recite the complete text of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* both in Pali and its Thai translation (Cremation Book of Noi Paurohit 26 November 1931 [2474] (2): ๓-๓ [ko-kho]). This *sutta* in its Pali version alone is some 27 pages long! I should also mention the fact that for their monastic exams Thai monks have had to memorise long text passages. For more on the importance of orality and memory in the spiritual practice of female Thai Buddhists in the early 20th century, see Seeger 2014.

As she won the prestigious writing competition, her exceptional understanding of the *Dhamma* and the effective way in which she was able to convey it were acknowledged by one of the highest authorities on Buddhist questions of her time. This fact certainly would have lent authority to her later work, i.e. the *Dhammānu-dhammapaṭipatti* texts. In a letter which he wrote to Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu in 1934, Phra Dunlayaphaksuwaman (1894–1982), a judge and one of Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro’s students, mentions that

As for *paṭipattivibhajana* [undoubtedly one of the five *Dhammānu-dhammapaṭipatti* texts that was published in the same year] I once asked Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn [Jaroen Ñāṇavaro], who had been distributing the text, if he authored the text or if anybody else did. For I felt that [the text demonstrates that the author must have had] a highly developed mind [*phum sung*] and [the way the *Dhamma* is presented in the text makes] the understanding of it rather easy. Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro remained silent for a while and then said that he was satisfied that I praised the text. [He also said that] he gave the text only to people of whom he thought were honestly interested in *Dhamma* practice. ‘But don’t be interested in the question of who wrote the text.’ [Did he think that the answer] may have decreased my faith [*saddhā*]? I am now not able to recollect all the details [of this conversation].⁵⁸

Here Phra Dunlayaphaksuwaman seems to have responded to a question by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu in relation with, or even possibly about the authorship of, *paṭipattivibhajana*. But, unfortunately, so far the letter from Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu that must have prompted Phra Dunlayaphaksuwaman’s comments has not been found yet. What this passage demonstrates though is that people must have been impressed by the profoundness of Khunying Yai’s text from the very first beginning. Was Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro’s unwillingness to mention the author’s name, surely he must have known that Khunying Yai was its author, motivated by concern about people’s conceptions of the fact that a

⁵⁸ Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro et al. 2010 [2553]: 69. I would like to thank Khun Naris Charaschanyawong for making me aware of this letter.

woman wrote such a profound text? This we may never know for sure. There are of course several possibilities for Khunying Yai's decision to 'disappear' as author of these texts. First, Khunying Yai may have thought that people of her time considered it inappropriate for a woman to discuss Buddhist doctrine on such a profound level. After all, this work is, as far as we know, one of, or may be even, the first of its kind ever 'authored' by a Thai woman – another fact that makes her texts so remarkable and valuable in the context of Thai (Buddhist) literature.⁵⁹ This seems to be at least possible, if not likely, in light of Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro's answer to Phra Dunlayaphaksuwaman's question about the authorship of *paṭipattivibhajana*. She may also have wanted to remain anonymous out of respect for the regular conversations that she had with her teacher, the high-ranking monk Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro, as these conversations seemed to have had a significant influence on her own 'writing.'⁶⁰ From interviews with descendants of a close friend of Khunying Yai, we know that she participated in meetings with a group of women who met regularly at the temple of Wat Sattanatpariwat, in Ratburi Province, in order to discuss and exchange their understanding of Buddhist doctrines and practice. It may of course be possible that these conversations had, at least to some extent, an influence on her 'writing' as well; in the texts there are some hints that would

⁵⁹ The only other work of that time which is comparable to some extent, is *Satsanakhun* (Buddhism for the Young) authored by Princess Poon Diskul and published in 1929. This book also won a competition (organised by the Royal Institute) and the author received the King's Prize for it. It has been translated into English by Phra Rajadharm Nides (Poon Diskul 1931). The text differs significantly from Khunying Yai's texts though in terms of level of language and the sophistication of the *Dhamma* teachings discussed. This is not surprising as *Satsanakhun* was written in such a way that it can, according to its translator Phra Rajadharm Nides, "be understood by an average child of ten years of age" (Poon Diskul 1931: I).

⁶⁰ For some time, she went to Wat Thepsirin nearly on a daily basis in order to discuss and study the *Dhamma* with Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro after the monastic lunch time (*chan phen*), i.e. around noon. This strong influence also becomes clear when comparing her texts with those of Somdet Phra Buddhaghosajarn Jaroen Ñāṇavaro: in terms of content and style there are some clear similarities.

support this assumption. Did she want to protect the anonymity of these women? So far, there is no evidence to confirm that the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts are actually based on or directly influenced by these conversations. Another possible reason may of course have been that she may have thought that the *Dhamma* should be independent of an individual. This may also be related to the next possible and probably most important reason: her personality and understanding of Buddhist doctrine. In the preface to *paṭipattipucchāvissajjanā*, she ‘wrote:’

I have published [*dai phim khuen*] this book ... at the occasion of the ordination of ... as I think it contains profound and popular teachings on Buddhist practice. It consists of *buddhabhāsita* [teachings of the Buddha] that constitute the principles of practice. Those who use this book and practice resolutely in accordance with the energy available to them, will certainly gain benefit from it and it will bring them unending happiness.⁶¹

In one of her answers in *Aṭṭhadhammapaṇḥa* she ‘wrote:’

the giving of *Dhamma* [*dhammadāna*] is more excellent than any other giving, ... As for the giving with a heart that has abandoned desire and covetousness and destroyed possessiveness [*macchhariya*], this kind of *dāna* will lead to skilful action that allows the attainment of *nibbāna* [*vivaṭṭagāmīkusala*].⁶²

The available biographical data on her life allows us to describe her as an extremely devout and enormously generous person. This is also corroborated by the fact that she supported the monastic community (*saṅgha*) with substantial donations which allowed the erection of numerous monastic buildings: the most important example here is the southern monastery Wat Thammikaram in Prajuabkhirikhan Province. Not only her texts but also her biography provide ample evidence that Khunying Yai must have had an enormously impressive knowledge of the *Dhamma*. Thus, it has been reported that even highly educated monks were afraid of her in this respect and did not want to accept her invitations due to their fear of having to get involved in conversations with her about Buddhist doctrine. A former

⁶¹ Khunying Yai 1933b [2476b]: [preface].

⁶² Khunying Yai 1931 [2474]: 10.

abbot of Ratburi temple Wat Sattanatpariwat, the highly revered Phra Thepsumethi (Yuak Cattamalo, 1914–2002), who had known her personally, tells us that she possessed highly advanced mnemonic skills from a young age and was teaching monks. Khunying Yai did not seek to become a teacher though, but preferred to devote her life to intensive practice in seclusion (*viveka*).⁶³ Having given up the amenities of her high social status and her enormous wealth, she spent the last ten years of her life in the white robes of a *mae chi* (*mae chis* are women who shave their hair, keep either the Eight or Ten Buddhist Precepts and wear white-coloured robes). After the death of her husband, she spent most of the time practicing at Wat Thammikaram, which she and her husband built and where her cremated remains are now buried. Despite, or perhaps just because of her enormous knowledge of the *Dhamma*, Khunying Yai has consistently been described as being a very humble person (*thom tua*). Thus, it seems fair to surmise that the main reason for her decision to publish her major work anonymously is a result of her understanding of Buddhist doctrine and practice. The objective of ‘writing’ and printing the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts was to present faithfully and spread the *Dhamma* and not to become famous or offer something new. The way Buddhist doctrines are explained and presented in the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts consistently demonstrates her understanding that the teachings discussed are seen as ‘the work of the Buddha’ and not the outcome of one’s own thinking or insights. In fact, she may have considered the fame she had received from winning the title *Ek-U* as inappropriate.

After my co-researcher and I had published our findings regarding the ‘real authorship’ of the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts in the widely read Thai magazine *Sinlapawatthanatham Art & Culture Magazine*,⁶⁴ the famous intellectual monk Phra Phaisan Wisalo sent us the following comments on our discoveries:

When it becomes widely known that *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* was authored by a woman and not by Luang Pu Man, will this book

⁶³ Cf. interviews with Khun Prasop Wisetsiri on 24/07/2013 (telephone interview), 12/11/2013 (in person) and 14/11/2013 (in person).

⁶⁴ The research was also reported on by the BBC: Dissanayake 2013.

still be repeatedly published and widely disseminated? I suspect that [this discovery] will lead to a lower number of republications. In fact, if the author had been named in the first editions of this book, *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* might have already been forgotten some 60–70 years ago. But due to this wrong [attribution of authorship] this book has not been lost in the sands of time, but has been reprinted for distribution numerous times ... but now as the truth about the real authorship is known, *Dhammānudhammapaṭṭipatti* may be reprinted on a smaller scale.⁶⁵

Muttodaya

As already mentioned above, Luang Pu Man left a relatively small body of texts. This seems to be rather surprising: we know from his biographies that even though during the first part of his monastic life he gave hardly any teachings and spent a lot of time on his own in the forest, during the second half of his life he provided numerous teachings as he had a huge number of monk students.⁶⁶ One of his biographers reports that he had more than 800 students.⁶⁷ His teachings and instructions on meditation practice were directly given by him to his students and are said to be still transmitted orally to the present day.⁶⁸ In addition, Luang Pu Man did not confine his teachings to his monastic followers, but many of his teachings were given to lay people, both men and women.⁶⁹ Luang Ta Maha Bua reports though that Luang Pu Man revealed the higher *Dhammas* (*sadaeng tham khan sung*) to his close disciples only.⁷⁰ The way in which he explained the *Dhamma* is described as being so profound and impressive that “no words can describe it” (*luae ja phannana*).⁷¹

⁶⁵ Personal email, 1 August 2013 (my translation from Thai); also published in Seeger and Naris 2013b [2556b]: 144.

⁶⁶ Bua 1998 [2541]: 40.

⁶⁷ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 258.

⁶⁸ Wirasak Jansongsaeng 2010 [2553]: 48.

⁶⁹ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 280; Bua 1998 [2541]: 59. See also Seeger 2014.

⁷⁰ Bua 1998 [2541]: 80.

⁷¹ Bua 1998 [2541]: 5; see also Bua 1998 [2541]: 107 and 139; and Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 70–71.

Muttodaya is one, and arguably the most widely read and circulated, of the few texts that we have from Luang Pu Man.⁷² It comprises 17 short sections. In the Thai language it has a length of altogether 27 pages (its English translation consists of only some 8,500 words). It is probably the only text by him that was published during his lifetime.⁷³ There exist several differing accounts on the origin of this text. Thus, in one of the earliest sources on *Muttodaya*, which is the Explanatory Remarks (*kham chi jaeng*) in Luang Pu Man's cremation book of 1950, Phra Ariyaguṇādhāra (Seng Pusso) writes that Luang Pho Wiriyang and Luang Ta Thongkham noted down the *Dhamma* sermons (*thammathetsana*) of Luang Pu Man when they spent a rainy season together with their master. Phra Ariyaguṇādhāra then took these notes to Luang Pu Man in order to ask for permission to publish them for dissemination. Luang Pu Man agreed but wanted him to edit the text first, i.e. to "re-arrange/recompile" – *riap-riang* (!) *sia mai* – and "shorten" (*tat suan*) it.⁷⁴ Luang Ta Thongkham in his biography of Luang Pu Man also describes the origin of *Muttodaya*. This biography is based on Luang Ta Thongkham's memory of the time between 1944 and 1949, which he spent together with Luang Pu Man. It should be pointed out that he wrote this biography only when he was over 70 years old, however, that is some five decades after the death of Luang Pu Man. He writes that three monks were involved in writing down notes on the sermons of Luang Pu Man, i.e. Luang Pho Wiriyang, Phra Wan and himself. He does not mention that Luang Pu Man gave any editorial instructions before the publication of the text.⁷⁵ Luang Pho Wiriyang Sirindharo, abbot of the Bangkok monastery Wat Thammamongkhon and one of the very few major direct disciples of Luang Pu Man who are still alive, completed his biography of Luang Pu Man in 1969 but explains that this biography is based on biographical notes which he made when living

⁷² *Muttodaya* has also been translated into English by Thanissaro (Bhūridatta Thera 1995).

⁷³ See Thongkham 2009 [2552]: 66–68; Bhūridatta Thera 2007 [2550]: 31.

⁷⁴ Cremation Book of Luang Pu Man 31 January 1950 [2493]: (2)–(4).

⁷⁵ Thongkham 2009 [2552]: 66–69.

very closely together with Luang Pu Man between 1942 and 1945.⁷⁶ In his account of the origin of *Muttodaya*⁷⁷ Luang Pho Wiriyang does not mention any other monk involved in the writing down of the Luang Pu Man sermons that form the basis of *Muttodaya*, apart from himself. Luang Pho Wiriyang writes:

Phra Ajarn Man never allowed anybody to write down his sermons. These have only been memorised, committed to one's heart. If anybody tried to write down his sermons, he would have certainly scolded and reprimanded him for that. However, I, the writer [*phu khian*], thievishly wrote down [*khamoi khian*] his sermons and was prepared to face all consequences of doing so, because of my love, admiration and utmost faith [in Luang Pu Man]. No matter how harshly he would scold me, I was prepared to face any consequences for the sake of writing down his sermons, for the benefit of future generations who do not have the opportunity to listen to his instructions. As all the monks and novices who spent time with him were afraid in this respect, no one dared write down his sermons.⁷⁸

Luang Pho Wiriyang narrates that first he tried to write down his notes secretly (*tham pen khwam lap*):

The method that allowed me to accomplish this was that when [Luang Pu Man] gave his *Dhamma* teachings, I tried to remember accurately everything [he said]... Once he had finished his sermon, I had the duty to give him a massage of not less than two hours. After that I would hurry back to my place in order to write down his sermons before my memory faded.⁷⁹

Over time, Luang Pho Wiriyang got closer to his master and when he was finally able to overcome his fear (*watklua*) he revealed to him that he had been secretly recording his sermons over a period of three months. When Luang Pho Wiriyang read out his notes to him, Luang Pu Man approved of it, saying that it accurately reflects his teachings.⁸⁰ Thus, in relevant sources, we find either one, two or

⁷⁶ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 312.

⁷⁷ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 69–72.

⁷⁸ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 71.

⁷⁹ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 71.

⁸⁰ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 72.

even three authors involved in the process of text production, and, according to at least one source, the text was edited by yet another monk. In all versions, however, it is explained that what was heard was first committed to memory before it was actually written down. Luang Ta Thongkham wrote in this respect that these texts served “as a kind of note of [one’s] understanding [of the sermons] or [one’s] memory in order to prevent oblivion.”⁸¹ The text’s title *Muttodaya*, however, was given on the basis of comments by yet another monk. It is said that the famous and influential monk Chao Khun Upāli Guṇūpamācariya (Jan Siricando), after having listened to a teaching on meditation given by Luang Pu Man said that this sermon was delivered with *muttodaya* (Thanissaro translated *Muttodaya* as “A Heart Released” whereas Cousins argues that, if it is translated from Pali, it should be translated as “arising of liberation”).⁸² Even though they certainly offer rather different perspectives, the accounts on the origin, presented above, may not necessarily contradict each other as it seems that initially it was not entirely clear what texts *Muttodaya* should consist of and according to the Luang Pu Man’s cremation book there were at least two “sets” (*chut*) of texts that were meant to be published together and called *Muttodaya*. However, only the first of these two has subsequently become known as *Muttodaya*.⁸³ Moreover, it has also been suggested that there are three to four different versions (*samnuan*) of *Muttodaya*.⁸⁴ It may be difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the origin of this (these) text(s) and the exact content, wordings and structures of the sermons texts by Luang Pu Man on which *Muttodaya* is based. Be this as it may, without providing further details Taylor reported that

there has been a great deal of controversy ... in regard to the legitimacy of *Muttothai* [*Muttodaya*] (for example, was it the work of the three monk-disciple compilers [...] or, was it faithfully the teachings of the master?) ... Because of [Luang Pu] Man’s personalized teaching

⁸¹ Thongkham 2009 [2552]: 66.

⁸² Personal conversation with Lance Cousins on 17 September 2013.

⁸³ See e.g. *Jittaphawana moradok lam kha thang phutthasatsana* 2000 [2543]: 130–147; Bhūridatta Thera 1995; Chomromkanlayanatham 2006 [2549].

⁸⁴ <http://www.sa-ngob.com/media/pdf/y56/04/p28-04-56am.pdf>, p. 4, last visited 10/02/2015.

mode, each of his pupils may have felt it inappropriate to transcribe his sermons and that perhaps they should be best left as an oral tradition (in this thinking, Man's direct line of pupils will be the rightful inheritors of their master's teachings).⁸⁵

Taylor further argues that "this antitextual stance is institutionally embedded in the traditional division between scriptural learning (*pariyatti*) and praxis (*patipatti*) as historical process since at least the early Christian era."⁸⁶ The authority of Luang Pu Man and his teachings is based on the belief about his advanced spiritual accomplishments as a result of intensive, long-term meditation practice. Thus, it has been widely believed in Thailand that Luang Pu Man was an *arahant*, a Fully Awakened One, who possesses a range of supernatural powers. Even though in his cremation book, there is no explicit claim to Luang Pu Man's *arahant*-ship, in the biographical part of it, his knowledge and the way he conveys it are presented as features of his advanced meditation practice. Thus, his individualised didactic technique of teaching the *Dhamma* is described as being possible due to his ability to read his disciples' minds and know their mental disposition and character (*kamnot jit nisai watsana*).⁸⁷ At the same time, it has been said that some content in his sermons is not based on scriptural study but on intuitive knowledge (*patiphana-yan*) that would emerge when giving sermons.⁸⁸

Even though the authenticity and authority of Luang Pu Man's teaching are based on the belief of his 'liberated mind,' it is important to point out here that this does not mean that Luang Pu Man has referred to his own advanced spiritual accomplishments in his texts. In fact, we know from Luang Ta Maha Bua's biography of Luang Pu Man that according to Chao Khun Upāli Guṇūpamācariya

⁸⁵ Taylor 1993: 152. See also Taylor 1997: 301.

⁸⁶ Taylor 1997: 308. See also Wirasak Jansongsaeng 2010 [2553]: 48. For a different perspective on this, see Cousins 2009.

⁸⁷ Bhūridatta Thera 2007 [2550]: 23.

⁸⁸ Bhūridatta Thera 2007 [2550]: 20–21; Luang Ta Maha Bua writes that Pali verses "arose spontaneously from his heart" (*phut khuen jak jai than*) (Bua 1998 [2541]: 237).

(Jan Siricando), Luang Pu Man did not talk about his own spiritual attainments.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, for many of his disciples his advanced transcendental states of mind were apparent and beyond any doubt a matter of fact.

The underlying concept of the idea that *Dhamma* teaching is authentic when taught by an awakened one also becomes apparent in the first section of *Muttodaya* itself:

The Lord Buddha taught that his Dhamma, when placed in the heart of an ordinary run-of-the-mill person, is bound to be thoroughly corrupted (*saddhamma-patirupa* [*saddhamma-paṭirūpa*]); but if placed in the heart of a Noble One, it is bound to be genuinely pure and authentic, something which at the same time can be neither effaced nor obscured.⁹⁰

It is also reflected in the following passage from Phra Ariya-guṇādhāra's Explanatory Remarks in the cremation book of Luang Pu Man:

When the good *Dhamma* takes root in the mind [*sandan*] of an ordinary person [*puthujjana*] it will turn into a counterfeit. This means it will be blended with an impure mental disposition. When [the *Dhamma*] is then taught to someone else, the impure mental disposition has an impact [on what is taught]. In order to preserve the good *Dhamma* so that it remains pure and unspoiled and can retain its original meaning, there should be a [spiritual] practice that eliminates the counterfeit.⁹¹

Buddhadhamma

Buddhadhamma was first published in 1971 and consisted of 206 pages. Its author Phra Payutto had been working on it for more than forty years, as a result of which the most recent edition of 2012 consists of nearly 1,400 pages.⁹² In the meantime, it has been reprinted more than 30 times and is now widely regarded as a masterpiece

⁸⁹ Bua 1998 [2541]: 109.

⁹⁰ Bhūridatta Thera 1995: 4. Translated from the Thai by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

⁹¹ Cremation Book of Luang Pu Man 31 January 1950 [2493]: (4)–(5).

⁹² At the same time, Phra Payutto has published numerous other texts as well. He arguably is one of the most prolific Buddhist writers in Thai history.

of Thai Buddhist scholarship and literature.⁹³ *Buddhadhamma* has cemented Phra Payutto's reputation as an authority, some would argue *the* authority, on Pali canonical questions in present-day Thai Buddhism. Due to his enormously detailed, precise and comprehensive knowledge of the Theravada Buddhist scriptural tradition, as demonstrated in his many books, he has become a towering figure in Thai Buddhist scholarship. This has, for example, become manifest by the fact that he has been called "a walking *tipiṭaka*."⁹⁴

The structure and content of *Buddhadhamma* reveal much about Phra Payutto's ideas of his authorship. Devised in accordance with the structure of the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*), *Buddhadhamma* contains a systematic presentation and explanations of Buddhist core doctrines, clearly and consistently referenced to Pali canonical scriptures.⁹⁵

The content of *Buddhadhamma* is also designed in a way that is to correlate it to the Pali canon even quantitatively:

The author of this book is reasonably confident that the relative proportions of the content on the different *Dhamma* teachings and the ways to understand them as presented in this book are very similar to the way they are presented in the Pali canon...⁹⁶

In its most recent edition, the author gives a detailed account of the rather long historical development of *Buddhadhamma*, which refers to numerous people who supported the writing of it in various ways and his many health problems that delayed the completion of the book. This part reads more like a biography of the book than about the author himself.

⁹³ *Buddhadhamma* has widely been regarded as one of the best books on Buddhism in the Thai language, with some saying in any language (see e.g. Sivaraksa 1982; Olson 1990: 258). See also Olson 1995.

⁹⁴ See Seeger 2009: 6.

⁹⁵ See Payutto 2012 [2555]: 846, 874–875.

A team of esteemed Thai scholars put *Buddhadhamma* on their list of "100 good Thai books that Thais should read" in the rubric "Religion/Philosophy" together with four other books (see <http://www.eppo.go.th/tank/100-Best.html>, last visited 10/02/2015).

⁹⁶ Payutto 2012 [2555]: 875.

Phra Payutto reflects on the rationale and objectives of his writing of *Buddhadhamma* in the following way:

Another objective of presenting so many sources or taking the scriptures as the fundamental point of reference for the content of this book, is that the book be free of the writer as well as the writer be free of the book, as much as possible... if the things that are presented in this book are authentic and correctly quoted and referenced, the one who presents them absolves himself from his responsibility and can disappear; the reader of the book does not have to think about the author any longer. The reader does not have to look for the one who presents the teachings but can fully concentrate on what has been presented in order to develop ways of using and implementing these teachings. If, however, there are still things that lack authenticity or are incorrectly presented, the presenter is still not able to remove himself entirely and still has to bear responsibility. Thus, the extent to which the work and the author are free of each other, is the criterion of the success of this book... If the author is successful in presenting the Buddha's teaching, it is as if he takes the reader to meet the Buddha personally. Then, the reader does not have to be concerned about the author any longer, and should, fully committed, listen to and reflect on the Buddha's teaching that was presented directly from the mouth of the Highest Teacher.⁹⁷

Analytical Discussion of the three texts

The history of the three texts, investigated in this article, reveals rather different and complex relationships between text and what is nowadays called their 'author(s).' Khunying Yai did not mention herself at all as author. The concept of an 'author,' as someone who creates something new, may not even have been in her mind when she 'wrote'/published her texts: it seems that for her, the major concern was to make a 'gift of the *Dhamma*;' her texts were to help to spread the words of the Buddha (*buddhabhāsita*) and to encourage and inspire Buddhist practice. For her, any reference to herself seemed to have been irrelevant and even inappropriate, in particular since she was closely referring to the words of the Buddha and canonical doctrines. A similar approach in this respect can be observed in Phra Payutto's work. He shares his work free of any copyright fees as 'a

⁹⁷ Payutto 2012 [2555]: 1145.

gift of the *Dhamma*’ for the benefit of society⁹⁸ and with the intention of demonstrating the “beauty and excellence of the *Dhamma*” (*phra tham chang pen tham di ngam loet lam*).⁹⁹ Luang Pu Man’s *Muttodaya*, however, emerged, initially at least, against the will of the ‘author’ and was not written by him at all: as one of his disciple monks put it, his texts were recorded “secretly” or actually “stolen” (*khamoi*), in the first instance committed to memory, edited, and then (according to some biographers) approved by the master. Meanwhile, Phra Payutto’s aim is to disappear as the writer of his book *Buddhadhamma* and one way of trying to achieve this is to reference meticulously the ideas it contains, citing only sources of the Pali tradition and carefully pointing out how Buddhist teachings which are believed to go back to the Buddha have been unfolded in the course of their transmission, within the Pali canon, and the commentary and subcommentary literature.

As shown, a major concern of all the three ‘authors’ discussed in this article is to prevent distortion of authentic meaning. Phra Payutto’s and Khunying Yai’s approaches in this respect seem to be very similar: having Gethin’s 1992 article on the *mātikās* in mind, one could argue that Phra Payutto and Khunying Yai carefully, but creatively and masterly, move solely within the “matrix of interconnecting lists” of Buddhist teachings (*Dhamma*) in the Pali canon.¹⁰⁰ Gethin explained that even though the term *mātikā* has been understood as meaning “summary” it should rather be seen “as the seed from which something grows. A *mātikā* is something creative – something out of which something further evolves. It is, as it were, pregnant with the Dhamma and able to generate it in all its fullness.”¹⁰¹ Thus, I want to argue here that Phra Payutto’s and Khunying Yai’s literary work well exemplify what Gethin describes as an important point of these *Dhamma* lists: “Using the lists is not merely an aid to learning the Dhamma by rote, as it were; on the contrary, the lists help one to learn the Dhamma with a view to

⁹⁸ Payutto 2012 [2555]: 1178.

⁹⁹ Payutto 2012 [2555]: 1148.

¹⁰⁰ Gethin 1992: 156.

¹⁰¹ Gethin 1992: 161.

its inner structure and dynamic”.¹⁰² While maintaining (and thus preserving) traditional structure and meaning, Phra Payutto’s and Khunying Yai’s work is not just a repetition of canonical texts but a creative composition of further texts, based on their understanding of the ‘inner workings’ of the *Dhamma*.¹⁰³ However, within this creative process of textual production, they both painstakingly avoid adding personal experience to their work. In her *paṭipattivibhajana*, Khunying Yai, for example, let her respondent answer one question in the following way, which seems to reflect the basic tenor of her whole work:

If you ask me a question about the understanding of the Noble Path [*ariyamagga*] in this way, I do not have the insights [*paññā*] to provide you with an answer here. For only someone who has been accomplished on the Noble Path, i.e. is an *ariyapuggala* from the level of a stream-enterer [*sotapanna*] upwards, would [be able to] answer this question accurately... An *ariyapuggala*, however, would not reveal his/her advanced state of mind [*gūṇadhamma*] anyway.¹⁰⁴

At the same time, however, Luang Pu Man has been depicted as someone who is also referring to the Pali canonical scriptures but his authority or the authority of what he said has first of all been seen (!) as coming from his personal insights that eliminated all *kilesas*, which could have interfered with a correct understanding and teaching of the *Dhamma*. As put by probably his most influential biographer, Luang Ta Maha Bua:

The inner knowledge of Phra Ajarn Man is of such profundity and complexity that it cannot be apprehended by ordinary people, ... His knowledge that emerged as a result of his spiritual practice is incalculable... [Luang Pu Man taught that] the *Dhamma* that is not written down in the Pali canon can be compared to the amount of water in the great ocean, whilst the *Dhamma* that appears in the Pali canon is comparable to the amount of water in a small jar.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Gethin 1992: 155.

¹⁰³ See Gethin 1992: 157. See also McDaniel 2008: 230–233.

¹⁰⁴ Khunying Yai 1934 [2477]: 8. Compare with Seeger 2009: 12.

¹⁰⁵ Bua 1998 [2541]: 343–344.

This perceived tension between *pariyatti* and *paṭipatti* also becomes manifest in the following episode recorded by his other main biographer, Luang Pho Wiriyang: when once in Bangkok, Luang Pu Man was asked by monks “you are living in the forest with no access to scriptures. How can you then make sure that you find the real *Dhamma*?”¹⁰⁶ To this question, Luang Pu Man is reported to have given an immediate reply: “For someone with wisdom the *Dhamma* can be found in every tuft of grass.”¹⁰⁷ Prompted to elaborate on this Luang Pu Man explained that

In the mind that has been trained in the correct way, wisdom [*paññā*] will arise ... For those who have not trained their mind in the correct way, real wisdom will not arise; even if they are studying the Pali canon, this will be fruitless ... For those who have trained their mind correctly, even if they do not engage in a study of the Pali canon, anything can constitute the *Dhamma* and manifest as the perfect [essence] of the Pali canonical scriptures.¹⁰⁸

All three ‘authors’ aimed to avoid being an originator of new meaning. The way they have pursued this is quite different though. Whereas Phra Payutto and Khunying Yai tried to let the canonical texts speak for themselves as much as possible, Luang Pu Man has been seen as speaking from direct personal experience. In the eyes of (at least some of) his disciples, this gives his words more authority and authenticity than the Pali texts, which may have, so it was argued, become corrupted in the course of their historical transmission and are rather limited in their content and scope when compared to the ‘real’ *Dhamma* that can and must be directly experienced with the mind. In this context, it is also interesting to note that Phra Dhammajedi, who was ‘chosen’ to be the one who asked Luang Pu Man the questions in the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts, even though by many also believed to have been an excellent practitioner of meditation too, was known for his scriptural expertise and administrative skills.¹⁰⁹ He also was of course a disciple of

¹⁰⁶ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 279.

¹⁰⁷ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 279; see also Gabaude 1982: 59.

¹⁰⁸ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 279–280; see also Bua 1998 [2541]: 217.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. Taylor 1993: 59.

Luang Pu Man since he was a novice.¹¹⁰ But the question is whether his strong background in *pariyatti* was (one of) the reason(s) as to why it was decided that he must have been the one who was asking these questions.

What is also noteworthy is that in the cases of all three authors discussed in this article the composite nature of their authorship is striking and particular, and thus important for a deeper understanding of these very texts. The texts were not produced by them alone, but there were many people involved in various ways. Even though it is of course true that this can be said to various degrees about any text, but the historical development of the three texts of this study reiterates the importance of keeping this fact in mind when talking about texts and their authors in a Thai Buddhist context (and of course beyond). Even in the case of *Buddhadhamma*, whose authorship is the most straightforward and clearly defined among the three cases discussed here, Phra Payutto mentions a large number of people who helped to make *Buddhadhamma* possible (some of them had a strong influence on the form of the text and even, albeit to a rather small extent, on the content). In the cases of Khunying Yai's texts and Luang Pu Man's *Muttodaya*, however, other people had a rather strong influence in the process of text production. It is not quite clear, and probably will never be, as to how the final text versions were derived, and the extent to which others influenced both text form and content.

Even though all the 'writers' which I have discussed here have tried to avoid being an 'author,' albeit in rather different ways and for probably different reasons, the question of their authorship is still of significant importance. In connection with what he calls "author-function" Foucault has argued that the

author's name is not ... just a proper name like the rest ... it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function ... The author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author's name ... shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech...

¹¹⁰ Thepjetiyajan 2008 [2551]: 277–278.

On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status.¹¹¹

In the light of this, I want to end my article with a number of observations, thoughts, and questions: what does the fact that the *Dhammānudhammapaṭipatti* texts were not ‘written’ by Luang Pu Man change for the discourse? What did people in the first instance motivate to put this text into the mouth of Luang Pu Man and what is the impact of this decision? On the other hand, now that we know that these texts were authored by Khunying Yai, but then put into the mouth of Luang Pu Man, what does this mean for the discourse, in particular but not only on gender in Thai Buddhism? How does Khunying Yai’s gender affect the authorship and the status of her text? (See, for example, the quotation from Phra Phaisan above!) The fact that Khunying Yai and Phra Payutto aimed to disappear as authors, something that is regarded as an indication of their convincing and inspiring Buddhist practice, does seem to give them additional authority as authors of these very texts. This is a fascinating paradox.

General Abbreviations

DN	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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¹¹¹ Foucault 1979: 146–147.

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