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TRANSFORMATIVE HISTORY:
NIHON RYŌIKI AND JINAKĀLAMĀLĪPAKARAṆAM

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Introduction: Conceptions of Nation and Religion in the Nihon Ryōiki and the Jinakālamālīpakaraṇam

In the wake of Said's critique of Orientalism and the seminal work of Benedict Anderson, scholars of Buddhist History have become acutely aware of how they understand and make understood historical "Buddhist" groups and agents. Generally, there has been a reluctance to view historical Buddhists and Buddhisms through the lens of modern conceptions of nationhood and local/regional identity. Instead, Buddhologists such as Gimello, Gyatso, Obeyesekere, Lopez and Hallisey have attempted to ask how those historical actors (i.e., the writers, epigraphists, architects and artists) conceptualize the group, the local or the state either relationally or independently. The search for pre-modern conceptions/assertions of local Buddhisms is a crucial issue to the field and forms the backdrop of the present study.

Before Anderson the general conception of local textual histories in Asia is that there was an indigenous historical and national/regional consciousness, which the historical writer held, and that the text in question rose out of the matrix of this pre-formed consciousness (e.g., an imperial chronicler in medieval Chengdu had a sense of being Chinese, a 12th century Kashmiri identified with India as a place or the epigraphist in Angkor saw himself and his inscription as reflecting an essential 'Cambodian' quality). Anderson, Chatterjee, Gellner, Taylor and others have asked us to abandon this Eurocentric presumption of an agent with a conscious conception of local (read: national), cultural and historical identity. Alternatively we should investigate how the historical writers themselves consciously or perhaps unconsciously conceived of their spatial and temporal group identity outside the paradigm of the Western conception of "nation."

Inspired by Anderson, Vietnam historian Keith Taylor argues in his November 1998 article “Surface Orientations in Vietnam: Beyond Histories of Nation and Region,” that we cannot understand pre-colonial/pre-modern Asian pasts, especially Vietnam’s, unless we abandon ideological notions of nation and region. By doing this we give up conceptions of “Vietnameseness” or pre-colonial Vietnamese people being conscious of their belonging to a clearly defined group occupying a bounded space. Taylor, like Chatterjee and Gellner, argues that the pre-modern Asian agent did not have a conscious conception of regional and historical identity that was analogous to modern understandings of the term “nation.” Taylor wants to resist designating the pre-modern peoples living roughly in an area known today as Vietnam as “Vietnamese” because he sees human experience as “ultimately episodic, not evolutionary.”¹ In an analysis of Taylor’s work Matthew Wheeler asks: “can we sustain historical

¹ I am indebted to Matthew Z. Wheeler, masters candidate in Regional Studies East Asia at Harvard University, for pointing out this source to me. See Keith Taylor, “Surface Orientations in Vietnam: Beyond Histories of Nation and Region,” *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 57, no. 4 (1998): 949, 970. See Wheeler’s “Challenges to Narrative History: Bifurcated History and Surface Orientations.” Unpublished paper, January, 1999. The question of whether the modern conception of the “nation” is applicable to culturally bounded spheres of pre-colonial Asia is at the center of the debate between East and Southeast Asian historians, most notably: Pelley, Gellner, Anderson, Taylor, Chatterjee, Wheeler and Duara. Although the history of this debate is beyond the scope of this paper, what is important to note is that Taylor’s latest critique of Duara’s thesis that there is a continuity between politicized cultural identities and modern conceptions of nation states is not supported by evidence in Lanna. As we have seen, Lanna chroniclers made great efforts to posit a bounded identity based on spatial and temporal paradigms. Even though Lanna is not a modern nation state, the monarchy and the chroniclers attempted to create a political as well as cultural conception that is analogous to modern conceptions of a nation. Based on this notion Duara, often citing Ricoeur’s theories of the relation between the historian and historical narrative (clearly influenced by Gadamer), asserts that the historian of the present can understand conceived identities by pre-modern states by understanding their evolution into what is conceived by Enlightenment thinkers as modern nation states. See Taylor, “Surface Orientations in Vietnam,” pp. 949-978; Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995); John Breuilly, “Approaches to Nationalism,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (New York: Verso, 1996): pp. 146-174; Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983); Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991 (revised from 1983); Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism since 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987; Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial*

inquiry while refusing to acknowledge a subject possessing an identity?”² Is it plausible to assume that pre-modern Asian people had no consciousness of belonging to a cultural, political, linguistic or religious entity that formed their identity? In the rough draft of an unpublished paper titled “Buddhism, Nationhood and Cultural Identity: the Pre-colonial Formations,” Gananath Obeyesekere says no. Obeyesekere critiques Anderson’s basic assumption, employed by Taylor, that there was no consciousness of group and regional identity before the colonial period³. He believes that “this historical definition of the emergence of the nation-state is ... unsatisfactory because it...rules out forms of life that might have close family resemblances to nationalism Eurocentrically defined.”⁴ Looking at Sri Lankan historical chronicles, like the *Mahāvamsa* and the *Dīpavamsa*, he shows that Sinhalese speakers largely identified with the “*sāsana*.” “By contrast [to *sāsana*] ‘nation,’” Obeyesekere writes,

“is an alien word that has no parallel in the Sinhala lexicon. It is *sāsana* that takes place. In the doctrinal tradition *sāsana* refers to the universal Buddhist community or church that transcends ethnic and other boundaries. This meaning coexists with another meaning that is found in post-canonical historical texts: *sāsana* is the Buddhist ‘church’ that is particularized by the physical bonds of the land consecrated by the Buddha — in the present instance, Sri Lanka. Here is the word [concept other than nation] we were looking for: it is the *sāsana* of Sri Lanka or, for most purposes, simply, the *sāsana*...Sinhala had no term that could be translated as ‘nation;’ they had a term that perhaps belonged to the same polythetic class as nation, namely *sāsana*.”⁵

World: A Derivative Discourse. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993; and, Wheeler, “Challenges to Narrative History,” p. 1-23.

² Wheeler, “Challenges to Narrative History,” p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

⁴ Gananath Obeyesekere, “Buddhism, Nationhood and Cultural Identity: The Pre-colonial Formations,” Rough Draft of Unpublished Paper: p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. Even though Kashmiri pandits travelled all over greater India and we find manuscripts of Kashmir Sanskrit works in places as far away as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Kashmiri writers emphasized the uniqueness and superiority of their country. See Mohammad Azhar Ansari, *Geographical Glimpses of Medieval India* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1989): pp. 16, 88-116. For example, Śyāmīlaka in the drama *Pādatadīṭaka* associates the most wretched prostitutes with foreign places like Gujarat (8:5), and Kṣemendra’s longest poem harangues various people from foreign lands; namely, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Maharastris, etc. (de Vreese notes that Kashmiris had their own script, the *Sarada*, that did not advance past the Gupta stage like the Punjabi script, but was used for

Obeyskere's use of the term *sāsana* seems to confirm Anderson's understandings of the pre-modern polity; namely, being bounded by a "sacral" or script language which gave "access to ontological truth," being ruled by monarchs who were considered divine and having a "conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable."⁶ However, Obeyskere emphasizes that he does not want to posit such a "radical break between the premodern and the post" which Anderson reifies by assuming that no premodern society possessed any conception of

most literary works in the medieval period). De Vreese, "Review of G.H. Schokker's critical-text edition of the *Pādatadīṭaka* of Śyāmīlaka in the *Indo-Iranian Journal* 13 (1971): 44-46. See also *Pādatadīṭaka* of Śyāmīlaka (8:5). One verse in Kṣemendra's *Desopādeśa* pokes fun at a Bengali student who visits Kashmir and disgusts the local Kashmiris with his physical repulsiveness. It reads: "kālakāṅkālasadṛśacchairo deśāntaragataḥ karaṅkasamkāya dūrāt janake varjyate janaiḥ" ("Chatra [the Bengali] resembling a black skeleton, having entered from another region is turned away in public by people in fear of his skull.") (*Desopādeśa* I.2). Another verse explicitly separates the five major groups of Brahmins (all associated with the Gangetic plains of India) from the learned in Kashmir. This verse also carries a hidden meaning associating these five foreign groups with the five lowest professions; namely, butchers, barbers, prostitutes, leatherworkers and gamblers (*Desopādeśa* I.14). Alberuni referred to Kashmir as a place separate from India (Hind) and Kashmiris as different from Hindus, but called it one of the greatest centers of Sanskrit learning. Indeed Kashmir produced considerable Sanskrit literature and thanks to the Georg Buhler's manuscript finding mission of the 1870's we now can confirm the Kashmiri origin of seminal works like the *Dhvānyaloka* and Abhinavagupta's *Locana*. (See Georg Bühler, "Detailed Report on a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS made in Kashmir, Rājaputana and Central India," *JBBRAS*, Extra Number (1877). See also the introduction to *The Dhvānyaloka of Ānandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta*, trans. Daniel Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and M.V. Patwardhan, ed. Daniel Ingalls (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990). What British historian, Vincent Smith, wrote in 1919 remains true: "although Kashmir has ordinarily occupied a position politically isolated from India, the influence of the country on the religion and civilization of its neighbours has been considerable." Still, although many pandits from the Gangetic plain and Southern India traveled to Kashmir to learn in a language that was associated with Indian culture and Kashmiris were well versed in non-Kashmiri, Sanskrit literature, Kashmiri literati and Hindus and Muslims outside of Kashmir considered Kashmir a place other than India (Vincent Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919): pp. 177-78). The degree the use of "deśa" in Sanskrit or "pradeśa" in Thai was used by writers and how much it reflected their consciousness of living in a "country" or "nation" as we understand the term in the modern West is a topic for another paper, but what is important to note is that Obeyskere's suggestion that there were alternative terms used by pre-modern Asian writers that had a family resemblance to "nation" leads us to examine regional literature like that of pre-modern Kashmir.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

historical and spatial identity that could have evolved into what is understood in the modern West as nationalism.

Situating myself in this discourse, I will look specifically at two types of Buddhist histories written in the pre-modern period. The first history is a collection of tales about the origins and extraordinary feats of different Buddhist images, nuns and monks known as the *Nihon Ryōiki* (NR), a history compiled sometime in the late 8th and early 9th centuries by a Buddhist monk, named Kyōkai, residing at Yakushi-ji⁷. I see the NR as partly supporting Anderson and Taylor's view of pre-modern Asian historical works, in that it does not posit the existence of a regional or national identity. Instead it runs counter to efforts by the Imperial government and Buddhist ecclesiastic elite to centralize and formalize the study and practice of Buddhism in the regions of Kyoto and Nara. I will demonstrate that a close reading of the text reveals an attempt by Kyōkai to create an alternative source of Buddhist life for his readers which was not subsumed under Imperial control. Therefore, Obeyesekere's interpretive schema is also helpful, because this alternative Buddhism has a "family resemblance" to is a type of consciousness of group identity. Kyōkai was part of one of the most important Buddhist temples in Japan and held the company of scholarly monks, but had a particular affinity to lay devotees who visited the temple⁸. After the famed Dōkyō incident, the state control of the sangha increased and imperial decrees were issued with great frequency outlining rules for Buddhist community organization and discipline⁹. The details of the historical context will be discussed below. First, let us look at two representative examples from the NR. First, the short text of "On a Nun Who Painted a Buddha Image out of Gratitude for the Four Kinds of Blessings and Gained a Power to Show an Extraordinary Sign."

⁷ See Kyoto Motomochi Nakamura, *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the Nihon Ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973): pp. 3-8. There is some controversy on the dating of the NR. However, by looking at the autobiographical information the author provides scholars can narrow the dates of his life to approximately 767 c.e. to 825 c.e. The NR was probably written, according to dates on the four extant manuscripts, from 810-824 c.e.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹ For detailed information on the Dōkyō incident see Ross Bender, "The Hachiman Cult and the Dōkyō Incident," *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 2 (1979): 125-54.

“In a village of Yuge, Wakae district, Kawachi province, there lived a highly disciplined novice nun. Her name is unknown. She lived in a mountain temple at Heguri, and, organizing a devotee’s association, painted a Buddha image with a picture of the six existences in order to give thanks for the four kinds of blessings. When completed, it was enshrined in the temple after the dedication ceremony. Meanwhile she left the temple, going from place to place on errands. During that time the picture was stolen, and she looked for it in vain, crying pitifully. Still leading the devotee’s organization, she wanted to free living beings, and the members went to Naniwa to visit the market. When saw a basket in a tree, they heard various animals crying in the basket. They waited for the owner to return, for they thought there must be animals in the basket and they wanted to buy them and set them free. Meanwhile, the owner returned. When they said to him, ‘We heard some animals in your basket, and we have been waiting to buy them from you,’ the owner said, ‘No, there is nothing alive in it.’ The nun did not give up, however. She continued begging till the merchants around them said to the owner, ‘You should open the basket.’ The owner was frightened, and he ran away, leaving the basket. When they opened it, they discovered the stolen image. In joy and tears the devotees cried, ‘Since we lost this image, we have been longing for it day and night. Now by chance, we have found it. How happy we are!’ When the merchants heard this, they gathered around and praised the nun’s perseverance. Joyfully the nun and the others set living beings free, held memorial services, and reconsecrated the image in the original temple, where it remained an object of devotion for both clergy and laity. This is indeed a miraculous event.”¹⁰

This story is similar to numerous others in the *NR*. There are tales of buried images that cry out from the sand to be rescued by passing provincial monks and other images made from wood that has been struck by lightning and emits music that protect court officials. In terms of a miracle tale regarding a relic of the historical Buddha, one reads:

“Niu no ate Otokami was a man of Iwata district, Totomi province. Although he made a vow to build a pagoda, he could not fulfill the vow for many years. He always regretted this and tried hard to find a way to do it. In the reign of Emperor Shomu, a girl was born to Otokami, though he was seventy and his wife was sixty-two. The baby’s left hand was clenched. In wonder, the parents tried to open it, but it was clenched more tightly than ever and never opened. Lamenting, they said, ‘It is a great shame for us to have given untimely birth to a crippled baby. But you are born to us as a result of the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.

work of causality.’ And they nursed her with great care and never neglected her...At the age of seven she opened her fist to show it to her mother, saying, ‘Look at this!’ When the mother looked at the child’s palm, she found two pieces of sari, the sacred ashes of the Buddha. In joy and wonder she relayed the news to people everywhere...Provincial magistrates and district governors rejoiced, organized a devotee’s association to build a seven-story pagoda, and enshrined the sari in the pagoda...At the completion of the pagoda, the child suddenly passed away. This is what people mean when they say that a vow once made will be achieved and fulfilled without fail.”¹¹

These stories of material objects connected to the power of the historical Buddha and Buddhist *lokottara* power in general reveal Kyōkai’s explicit or implicit efforts to either create or relate a local Buddhism in Japan. Their subjects are the activities of common people and their experience as Buddhist agents in the quotidian world outside the world of the court and Imperial monasteries. These stories seem to confirm Anderson and Taylor’s notion of pre-modern Asian history. They are local and specific and contain no reference to the notion of Japan as a nation or its people as possessing that notion, but at the same time they are working to foster some type of group identity. However, before making any determinations as to the author of the NR’s understanding of Japan as a nation or Buddhism as a trans-local phenomenon, I turn to Medieval Northern Thailand for a reading of a different kind of miracle tale.

The *Jinakālamālīpakaraṇam* (JKM) is a Pali historical chronicle composed by Ratanapañña between 1516 and 1528 in Lanna (modern Northern Thailand and Northwestern Laos). A few passages from the JKM will suffice to cast light on the efforts of the text to establish temporal and spatial authenticity for a local expression of Buddhism that differed significantly from the NR¹². In describing the founding of the sacred city of

¹¹ Ibid., p. 203.

¹² This story is also in the *Camadevivaṃsa*. See George Coedes, “Documents sur l’histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental,” *BEFEO* 25, nos. 1-2 (1925): 141-170. See also Sanguan Chotsukra, *Prachum Tamnan Lanna Thai*, Vols. 1&2 (Krung Thep: Odiansadon, 1972); and, Donald Swearer and Sommai Premchit, *The Legend of Queen Cama: Bodhiramsi’s Camadevivaṃsa Translation and Commentary* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998): pp. 63-65. See also James Pruess, ed., “The That Phanom Chronicle: A Shrine History and its Interpretation,” *Cornell Univ. Data Paper*, no. 104 (1975) for an extremely similar story in structure regarding the breast-bone relic. See especially p. 6 (note this text was originally written in Lao with Tham script). A slightly different story is found in the

Haripuñjaya in Lanna, Ratanapañña relates the story of the crow that drops excrement in King Adicca of Lanna's mouth. The king is told by his advisors to capture the crow and place a young boy in its cage so it can learn the crow's language. After many years the king learns from the child translator that the crow was trying to prevent Adicca from urinating on the place where the Buddha had placed one of his relics over 1500 years previously when he had flown to Haripuñjaya¹³. The king finds the place the Buddha had flown to and predicted the founding of a great city and the rule of Adicca. Henceforth the relic was honored by the entire populace with gold, flowers and incense and numerous monks were brought in to watch over the reliquary¹⁴. This story not only claims that the Buddha

Tamnan Mulasasana Wat Pa Daeng. There, in the reign of Adicca, a golden cedi magically appears, but when the king attempted to dig a trench around it in order to approach it sank into the ground. The king's Bhikkhus advised him to fill in the trench (suggesting something sacred about the land itself): the relic re-appeared. The king realizing he couldn't move the relic from that space built a cedi with gates around it and a vihara next to it. See Donald Swearer and Sommai Premchit, "A Translation of *Tamnan Mulasasana Wat Pa Daeng*: The Chronicle of the founding of Buddhism of the Wat Pa Daeng Tradition," *JSS*, vol. 65, part II (1977): 77-78.

¹³ A similar description of the Buddha's prediction of Adicca finding the relic and becoming a great Buddhist king is found in the *Chronicle of Lampun*. Notton's translation reads: "*Le Buddha considéra l'emplacement et déclara: 'Lorsque je serai parvenu au Nibbāna, une grande capitale sera fondée dans ce lieu, un souverain du nom d'Aittaraja [Adicca] régnera sur ce pays, et ma relique, placée à cet endroit, sera retirée par lui afin d'être adorée par les humains et les Devatā.'*" Camille Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Vol. II (Paris: Limoges, 1930): p. 6.

¹⁴ See the Ratanapañña, *Jinakālamāli*, transcribed from the Siamese text and edited by A.P. Buddhadatta (London: PTS, 1962): pp. 106-110.

Note the similarity to this episode to the narrative of the transfer of relics in the *Thupavaṃsa*, where Sonuttara is told of the Buddha's prediction that a relic will be established in Sri Lanka. Vacissaratthera, *The Chronicle of the Thupa and the Thupavaṃsa*, trans. N.A. Jayawickrama (London: PTS, 1971): p. 124. Although the greater part of the *Sāsanavaṃsa*, written in 1861 in Burma, provides a history of Buddhism in various regions of Burma, it also includes a chapter about the establishment of Buddhism in Northern Thailand. One episode relates how the Buddha unwittingly tosses a seed from a yellow myrobalan fruit which does not land on the ground but hovers in the air. The Buddha smiled and told Ananda that in the future a relic would be situated in this place (i.e., Hari [a yellow myrobalan] puñjaya [eating]). It also explains that after this time the religion was founded in Kamboja (Cambodia) and Ayudhya among other places. The founding of the religion actually happened five more times in Northern Thailand (Yonok country) by famous teachers with magical powers. See Pannasami, *The History of the Buddha's Religion*, trans. B.C. Law (London: PTS, 1952): pp. 54-59.

himself saw something valuable about the land of Lanna before he passed into *parinibbana*, but also that he predicted, and therefore sanctioned, the reign of King Adicca¹⁵. Furthermore, it shows the power that a relic has for attracting monks, laypeople and wealth to a city. Interspersed throughout the remainder of the text the relic is mentioned as a place where foreign kings, most notably the kings of Burma and Ayudhya, monks and masses of people, come to pay homage. Recording these visits works implicitly to inform the reader that even foreign military enemies of Lanna acknowledge the importance of the place, royal lineage and the relic that they must travel out of their own kingdoms to visit.

In the last section of the text we find another telling passage in which the author emphasizes the importance of Lanna as a place. In this short passage Ratanapañña mentions more than 13 different place names in Northern Thailand in relating the story of King Jethhadhipati's sponsorship of the construction of several monasteries. He tells us that the monasteries attracted monks from three different Theravada lineages and had the most blessed Buddha images installed in them. Learned ascetic elders chose Lanna to reside in and there they chanted the *Tiṭṭaka* and received gifts of robes of the "finest silk."¹⁶ The king is depicted as single-handedly assuring the propagation *sāsana* and having the power to appoint the *Saṅgharāja* (head of the *saṅgha*), a claim which is controversial in a land populated by six major Theravada kingdoms¹⁷. One passage from the last

¹⁵ Karen Derris, a doctoral student in the study of religion at Harvard University, has helped me considerably in understanding the importance of place in this particular episode. See her "The Questions We Ask of History." Paper delivered at the Graduate Student Conference in Buddhist Studies, Harvard University, December, 1997. Cited with permission of the author.

¹⁶ Pannasami, *The History of the Buddha's Religion*, p. 182.

¹⁷ See A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, "Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 12, Inscription 9," *JSS*, vol. 62, part 1 (1974): 95, 110-111, regarding the title of *Saṅgharāja* in Medieval Northern Thailand. Although Griswold and Prasert correctly point out that we do not know if there was one *Saṅgharāja* for the entire *Saṅgha* in multiple kingdoms, they fail to note that these monks traveled from city to city nine months of the year, but belonged to one temple which they resided in for the rains retreat. Some inscriptional evidence proves that scholastic monks who were abbots of temples in the North were travelling from Chiang Mai to Sukhotai to Sajjanalaya to Ayudhya. Moreover, even though the monks were residing in different places they were part of the same order and according to the JKM and the inscriptions acknowledged one *Saṅgharāja* of their order. Slab III

section highlights Ratanapañña's desire to depict his monarch as a *dhammarāja*. It reads:

“[A]nd again, during the month of Phussa, the sovereign Lord installed at the Uposotha-hall of the Monastery of the Great Bodhi, with manifold ministrations and honour, the Kamboja Image in a golden pasada which was beautifully painted with diverse designs and inlaid with purified gold. He invited thirty-six great Elders versed in the Three Piṭakas led by the Great Rājaguru...and he honoured (the Dhamma) with (the gift of) a pair of excellent robes to each one of them. Even on the full-moon day, he made the royal emissary from the South [Ayudhya], pay homage to the Great Relic of Haripuñjaya...[O]n Thursday the thirteenth day of the month of Magha was begun the work of construction of a visitor's rest at the Rattavana Monastery. And next, the King gave his consent to the Sihala Fraternity to carry out, under the planetary combination of Jetttha, the formal act of conferring the higher ordination on Saturday the fourth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Citra in the year 885 of the Royal Saka Era, the year of the Goat [1524 C.E.]. And it was concluded on the last quarter. There were 240 aspirants to higher ordination. A detachment of soldiers set out to the North on Sunday the fifth day of the fortnight. On Saturday the eleventh day, the royal prince named Jayaganga born in the dynasty of the overlord of Khema, together with his followers, solemnly pledged by oath in the presence of the Triad of Gems at the Sihalarāma and drank his oath of allegiance.”¹⁸

(6-23) also shows that their were different *Saṅgharāja* for each order, but members of each order traveled far and wide and had temples in different *muang* in the areas in Northern Thailand. We must be wary of applying local political borders to the translocal travelling *Saṅgha* in mainland Southeast Asia. See also Prasert on Nagara, *Tamnan Munlasatsana* by *Wat Suan Dok*, pp. 22-32. The Northern Thai chronicles follow a pattern in which famous Bhikkhus always end off their travels in Lanna.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182. The Pali reads:

“*Phussamāsamhi pana rājādhipati Mahābodhārāme uposathāgāramhi anekasakkāra-sammānehi vividha-vicitta-ratta-niddhantasuvannakhacite suvaṇṇapāsāde Kambojapatimam āropesi. Aṭṭhamito paṭṭhāya yāva puṇṇamiyā Mahārājāgūrumukhe chattiṃsa-tiṭṭhaka-dharamahāthethere nimantetvā...dhammapariyāyaṃ suni; ekekena varacivarayugena pūjesi. Puṇṇamiyaṃ yeva rājā Dakkhīnarājādūtam pi Haripuñjayamahādhātuṃ vandāpesi...Māghamāse terasamiyaṃ Guruvāre Rattavanavihāramhi āgantuka-uttāhanaparikkammaṃ ahosi. Tato pana rājā pañcāsīyādhike aṭṭhasata-Sakarāje Ajavassamhi Citramāsassa kālapakke catutthiyaṃ Sorivārasmiṃ Jeṭṭhanakkhattayoge Sihalaḡaḡassa upasampadakkammaṃ anujāni...Cattālīsādhikā dvisatanāgā ahesuṃ. Pañcamiyaṃ Ravivāramhi uttara-dīsāya balakāyo nīyasi. Ekādasamiyaṃ Sorivārasmiṃ Sihalarāme Khemādhipatino vaṃse jāto Jayagaṅgā nāma rājaputto saha parivārehi ratanattaya-sammukhaṭṭhāne saccam katvā sapathodakam pivi.*” Ratanapañña, *Jinakālamālī*, pp. 125-126.

This passage as well as the story of the crow are just two examples of how Ratanapañña establishes Lanna as the most sacred Theravada kingdom in mainland Southeast Asia¹⁹. The narrative is strung together by stories of the construction of great reliquaries and Buddha images, the visits of auspicious white elephants and the establishment of monasteries²⁰. These stories reinforce the notion of Lanna as a sacred space. In fact, I believe that the author included the passages about neighbouring kings paying homage to sacred places in Lanna not only to fix Lanna as one sacred place in the Theravada world of Southeast Asia, but as the most sacred of kingdoms. Charles Hallisey notes that this effort at establishing authenticity is seen in the use of the term “vaṃsa.” *Vaṃsa*, Hallisey states, is the word for “bamboo” as well as “chronicle/lineage/dynasty” and invokes the image of linear growth from a single root. Therefore, the highest section of the bamboo is not one of many branches but is the absolute apex. In the context of the history of the growth of Buddhism he suggests that the term *vaṃsa* is used to suggest the idea that once the tradition grows it has no need to go back to its origin²¹. This image helps us understand the relationship between temporal and spatial authenticity in the JKM. Ratanapañña constructs a history in which Lanna is depicted as the place where the Theravada will flourish, because it is predicted by the Buddha as a sacred place. That prophecy is fulfilled by a series of Lanna monarchs who patronize the *sāsana* and protect the images and relics of the Buddha. It is connected to its origin, but its segment is spatially separate.

¹⁹ I am using the term “sacred” in the sense that Durkheim and Eliade used it; namely, connected to a pristine primordial time. However, like Turner I see the conceptions of “holy” or “sacred” changing over time. Images, shrines and relics are connected to a primordial past in the history of Buddhism, but their degree of sacredness grew over time and was conceived differently in different places. See note #61 below.

²⁰ The white elephant (Thai, *chang puak*) has long been a symbol of royal auspiciousness in Thailand and Laos. White elephants were depicted on the pre-communist Lao flag and the present king of Thailand is considered the most auspicious of all Thai kings because he has over 19 white elephants in his royal elephant corale.

²¹ The *Sihingnidāna* by Bodhiransi (1402-1442), author of the *Camadevivamsa*, recounts the history of the movement of a Buddha image in Ceylon to Burma and then to Nakorn Sei Thammarat, Ayudhya, Kamphaengphet, Chiang Rai and finally Chiang Mai in 1407. This chronicle can be seen as paralleling the JKM’s notion of Chiang Mai being the final and most legitimate resting place of relics, images and famous monks.

Having looked briefly at how the NR and the JKM establish the presence of different kinds of local Buddhisms, I will attempt to provide some answers to the larger question of how Buddhologists today can talk about Buddhism in a particular time and place without reifying post-colonial notions of nation and historical consciousness and projecting them back onto pre-modern Buddhist agents. From there I will show how Kyōkai and Ratanapañña diverge. Kyōkai, although understanding his own connection to the larger, trans-local Buddhist religion, wanted to provide authenticity to local Buddhist practice (outside the power of the Imperial control of Buddhism and the elite community of bureaucratic monks residing in royal temples). Ratanapañña may have wanted to signal the emergence of a legitimate local expression of Buddhism that was protected by the king and sanctioned by a prediction of the Buddha. His history may have been part of a process of state formation and so, unlike Kyōkai, wanted to fuse the practice of Buddhism and the rule of the king versus undermining state control.

Understanding *sāsana* as Obeyesekere does, as a conceived reality by which Buddhist historians across Asia understood themselves as being a part, we can examine regional, “Buddhist” chronicles in pre-colonial Asia as not emerging out of a pre-conceived conception of nation or region, but forming a connection with the *sāsana* that in turn defined themselves as distinct regional expressions of that *sāsana* vis-à-vis other regional dynastic polities. Examining the JKM and NR, I will show not only on how Ratanapañña and Kyōkai understood their time and place as part of the *sāsana*, but also what service their texts may have had in shifting relations between the state and religion in Japan or Lanna state and cultural formation in an emerging Southeast Asian polity. My main queries are how the two authors, using the genre of history, assert local identity and independence in the *Nihon Ryōiki* and *Jinakālamāṭīpakaraṇam*? How did they conceptualize the local, the present and the political in relation to the translocal, the past, and the religious? How can their work be read as polemical? And finally, what type of history are the NR and the JKM imagining that could be analogous to modern notions of nation and region?

To answer these questions, I will first examine how the JKM explicitly or implicitly established temporal and spatial authenticity for political power in medieval Lanna, as well as demonstrate how regional political

trends impacted the literary production of chronicles. Moreover, I will show that arbitrary divisions between “religious” and “political/dynastic” histories long held by Southeast Asianists need to be deconstructed to fully understand the role of history writing in Lanna. In the final analysis I hope to make evident the political subtext of the JKM. This will demonstrate that Ratanapañña’s text could have been used as a type of weapon in a war to maintain Lanna’s independence from empire building states on its borders. This in turn will demonstrate that even though we may not establish that the author held a pre-formed, conscious notion of historical and local identity in terms of the Eurocentric concepts of nation and region, his work can be read as creating a local identity by establishing uniqueness in relation to its expansionist neighbour and cohesiveness with the larger *sāsana*. Therefore, the production of history in Lanna can be freed from analyses based on conceptions of “identity” and instead be examined as being crucial to state formation in emerging polities on the boundaries of the Buddhist world.

From there I will highlight how the NR’s notions of history are different from the JKM. We will see that in the NR, Kyōkai paid more attention to the power, values and individuality of the Buddhist practices and lives of “commoners” instead of a detailed and cohesive history of the Imperial temples, their elite monastic residences and their court patrons. By unpacking the miracle tales presented above, I will assert that Kyōkai was writing at a time when many monks, recoiling from the corruption and control of religion at the hands of the Imperial court and elite, were attempting to forge their own orders and build their own temples outside of Imperial control. Examined under this light, Kyōkai can be seen as, along with Saichō and Kūkai, one of the earliest Japanese proponents of the move away from Imperial control of Buddhism. His own vision of the Japanese Buddhist *sāsana* was different from that of the state in which he lived and in his writing he attempts to project that vision to his readers. Moreover, he can also be seen, along with Gyōgi and Dōshō, as an extremely early propagator of Buddhist belief to the common people of the Japanese countryside, which became popular much later under Shinran, Ippen and Nichiren.

In the conclusion, I will posit that these two histories have transformative aspects, because they not only are written at a time of great societal

changes, but also by authors who wanted to play a role in facilitating those changes. I hope to demonstrate that both the NR and the JKM present history in such a way as to shift the center of the Buddhist world. The JKM depicts Lanna as center of the Buddhist world of Southeast Asia, while the NR depicts the mountains, villages and communities of merchants and farmers as the center of the Japanese Buddhist world. I should be evident that by seeing these histories as transformative, we can avoid projecting notions of nationhood and national consciousness back onto these two pre-modern writers. Instead, we can see them as creating literature that in turn created alternative visions of the *sāsana* which may have had “family resemblances” to modern conceptions of nationhood.

Jinakālamālipakaraṇam: Establishment of spatial and temporal authenticity

No Thai, Lao or Western academic study of historiography in medieval, mainland Southeast Asia that I have come across has commented in any detail on the political motivations of the JKM or other Pali historical chronicles commonly known as *tamnan* in Thai or labeled “universal histories” by Southeast Asianists. Prince Damrong, Charnvit Kasetsiri, George Coedes, Camile Notton, David Wyatt, Craig Reynolds and others have divided Lanna’s medieval historical writing into two types — the *tamnan* and the *phongsavadan*. The *tamnan*, they all emphasize, is “religious history,” while the *phongsavadan* is secular/political. This division is made because the subject of the *tamnan* histories, the JKM, the *Camadevivamsa* (CDV) and the *Mulasāsana* (MS) among others, are characterized by providing the reader with a chronological history which traces the history of Buddhism from Gotama or previous Buddhas through the establishment of the Theravada in Sri Lanka to its establishment in Northern Thailand with the accouterments of relics, scriptures, stupas and images²². The *phongsavadan* histories, the *Phraratchaphongsavadan*

²² Note that there are several other shorter extant *tamnans* written in Thai Yuan including the *Tamnan Muang Ngoen*, *Yang Chiang Saen*, the *Tamnan Muang Suwannakhomkham*, the *Tamnan Singhanawatikuman* and others which attempt to create temporal and spatial authenticity for their respective *muang* (city-states) through linking their *muang* with the lineage of the Buddha and justifying their temples as authentic “depositories of merit.” Wyatt notes that they are “localized in their subject, they are at the same time universal

Krung Si Ayudhya chabap Luang Prasoet being the clearest example, provide king lists and, according to Wyatt, are “secular,” “not religious” because they do not provide a history of Buddhism or of the wandering of Buddhist relics, but simple, chronological royal lineages justifying the legitimate transfer of power from Ayudhya to Bangkok’s Cakri dynasty after the Burmese invasion of 1767²³. Even though *tamnan* detail religious history this does not account for their possible subtext. What these scholars have overlooked is the arbitrariness of these genre labels which is made evident by examining the texts in their historical context as well as understanding the need for temporal and spatial authenticity for kingdoms to politically survive in medieval “Thailand” and “Laos.”²⁴

Examining the claim to temporal and spatial authenticity we can flesh out the political motivations that drive the JKM’s narrative. In similar ways to the “Sri Lankan” and “Burmese” chronicles (*Mahāvamsa*, *Culavamsa*, *Dīpavamsa*, *Buddhāvamsa*, *Thupavamsa*, *Dhatuvamsa*, *Sāsanavamsa*) the JKM traces the history of the Theravada from the life of Gotama through Asoka’s reign to the establishment of the dhamma in Sri Lanka. From there it provides an account of the advent of the Theravada in Burma and finally in Lanna. This linear chronology is methodical and heavily detailed in order

in quality.” Wyatt, however, dismisses their political motivation when their local power was being threatened by Chiang Mai, Lan Xang and later Ayudhya. See David Wyatt, *Studies in Thai History* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994): pp. 5-11. These histories are designed to justify local rule associated with the local leaders’ possession of Buddhist relics. This subject of relics is too vast to be discussed here and I encourage the reader of Thai to consult Sanguan Chotsukrat, *Prachum Tamnan Lanna Thai*, Vols. 1&2 (Krung Thep: Odiansadon, 2515 [1972]); and, Prasert na Nagara, *Tamnanmunlasatsasana Chiang Mai Chiang Tung* (Krung Thep: Ekasanwichagan Samakhom Phrawattisat, 1994). Camille Notton, *Annales du Siam, I-III: Chronique de Xiang Mai* (Paris: Limoges, 1932) is also an excellent collection. For a brief history of later Sri Lankan and Mainland Southeast Asian chronicles in Pali see K.R. Norman, “Pali Literature,” in *A History of Indian Literature*, vol. 7, pt. 2, ed. Jan Gonda (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983): pp. 140-144.

²³ See also P. Schweisguth, *Étude sur la littérature siamoise* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1951): pp. 43-44; and, O. Frankfurter, “Events in Ayudhya from Chulasakaraj 686-966,” *JSS* 6, no. 3 (1909): 38-62.

²⁴ This position runs decidedly against Swearer’s interpretation of the pedagogical function of the *Camadevivaṃsa*. He writes that the *Camadevivaṃsa* “was intended to be read and heard, primarily as a document of religious instruction.” Even though this was certainly a function of the text, it can not be claimed as the primary one. See Donald Swearer and Sommai Premcit, *The Legend of Queen Cama: Bodhiramsi’s Camadevivaṃsa a Translation and Commentary* (Albany: SUNY, 1998): p. xxiii.

to convey, without a doubt, a clear, legitimate progression of Buddhism from its founding to its royal patronage in Lanna²⁵. The effort of the JKM and other Lanna chronicles to establish temporal authenticity has long been understood by Southeast Asianists and Buddhologists²⁶. However, what has not been observed is the Lanna chronicles' simultaneous claim of spatial legitimacy for Lanna as a place in the Theravada world of mainland Southeast Asia that had no completely dominant cultural or political center.

JKM: History as weapon

Heine-Geldern, Keyes, Swearer, Reynolds and most notably Tambiah have written extensively on the idea of the medieval Southeast Asian city as a sacred center, what Tambiah calls, a "galactic polity."²⁷ They all note that cities, like Chiang Mai, Ayudhya, Angkor, Sukhotai were designed and built in the shape of a maṇḍala which would conceptually

²⁵ See Donald Swearer, "Myth, Legend and History in Northern Thai Chronicles," *JSS*, vol. 62, part 1 (1974): 69 for information on the dating of the JKM. Regarding the name of the author, the JKM reads: "[W]hosoever sage who was living there receiving that king's active patronage, was given the name Ratanapañña as wisdom (*pañña*) to him as a jewel (*ratana*); he indeed wrote that valuable book." See Ratanapañña, *Jinakālamāli*, pp. 125-26. See also Coedes, "Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental," *BEFEO*, XXV, nos. 1-2; as well as the English translation of the Pali Text Society entitled: *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conquerer*, trans. N.A. Jayayickrama (London: PTS, 1968). For this line see: Jayayickrama, *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conquerer*, 185. Norman notes that the original Pali version shows particularities of Northern Thai Pali; namely: "unhistorical gemination of consonants and the converse, unusual retroflexion of dentals, and unusual spellings. These were regarded as errors and removed from the European edition, but it is possible that they are genuine characteristics of Pali as it was spoken in Northern Thailand in the sixteenth century" (Norman, "Pali Literature," p. 144).

²⁶ Northern Thai inscriptions usually focus specifically on establishing temporal authenticity through detailed king lists, but by the fact of their immobility they can be seen as suggesting a value to the place they occupy. For a good example of one of these king lists concerning the royal line of King Mangrai, see Cham Tongkamwan, "Kam An Silajareuk Wat Phra Yeun Jangwat Lampun," *Sinlapakorn* 1 (1957): 61-69.

²⁷ Tambiah notes that the use of the term "maṇḍala" geopolitically is found in Kauṭīliya's *Arthaśāstra*. See his *World Conquerer, World Renouncer: A Study in Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976): p. 102.

mirror the cosmos as understood by the Theravada²⁸. Tambiah writes: “[T]he [Southeast Asian] kingdom was a miniature representation of the cosmos, with the palace at the center being iconic of Mount Meru, the pillar of the universe, and the king, his princes and the ruling chiefs representing the hierarchy in Tavatīmsa heaven.”²⁹ This urban/cosmic parallelism is well known and I will not needlessly go over it in any more detail here, but this will help us understand the political subtext of the JKM and other Northern Thai chronicles. Looking specifically at cities in Lanna, Swearer discusses this concept in specific relation to Chiang Mai and Lampun. He notes that “sacredness” in Northern Thailand is always associated with Buddhist history and how a particular place relates in that history. The most important physical connection to that history is a relic of the Buddha whose reliquary became the “axial center of the sacred-city-kingdom.”³⁰ Swearer also shows that the chronicles relate the establishment of twelve reliquary centers in the Theravada world locating eight in Lanna and none in Ayudhya and only one in Southern Burma³¹. This establishes an entire “sacred geography” in which Lanna becomes the center vis-à-vis Ayudhya.

²⁸ See Frank Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, trans., *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1982): introduction. Note that the pioneering work about sacred space and relics being the “axial center” of a city and a kingdom is found Paul Mus’s *Barabudur: Esquisse d’une histoire du bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*, 2 vols (Hanoi: Imprimerie d’Extrême-Orient, 1935).

²⁹ Tambiah, *World Conquerer*, p. 109. See also Swearer regarding the Brahmanical origins of the Yuan Thai conception of the *maṇḍala* and Buddhist cosmology in his “The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center,” in *The City as Sacred Center: Essays on Six Asian Contexts* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987): p. 105.

³⁰ See Swearer, “The Northern Thai City,” p. 108. Swearer writes: “[T]he sanctity of the Northern Thai city...also depends on the support and virtuousness of the reigning monarch, not simply his discovery of sacred Buddha relics and the presence of powerful Buddha images. Tilokaraja (1441-1487), whose rule initiates the apogee of the Chiang Mai kingdom, models his reign after King Aśoka, or at least the chroniclers seem to see him in this light. He sends emissaries to India to get saplings of the sacred Bodhi Tree which he then enshrines within the precincts of one of the great Chiang Mai monasteries. He also reputedly regularized the monastic order and the sacred Pali texts by calling what the Thai consider to be the 8th ecumenical Buddhist Council. In short, through his support of the Sinhalese Mahavihara monastic tradition, he assures a greater degree of religious and political unity which was important for the extension and assertion of his own power and authority” (109).

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

What Tambiah, Swearer and others have failed to note is how religious historians used spatial terminology and the establishment of sacred geography in their histories for regional, political purposes³². By seeing how the JKM combines the establishment of sacred geography and linear Buddhist history to establish temporal and spatial authenticity for Lanna we can better understand motivations for the composition of the text and the historical context of its writer. The military and political history of mainland Southeast Asia can only be understood by understanding the problem of manpower. Due to the relatively low population in medieval Thailand kingdoms competed with each other for the control of a relatively small workforce. For a long time it has been known that the civilization of Angkor declined because it could not economically support a workforce and its population began moving to other urban centers in the region³³. This abandonment of cities by the workforce was also a problem in Lanna at the time the JKM was composed and was a concern of the monarchy. Stuart-Fox notes that the power vacuum that followed the fall of the empires of Angkor, as well as the more distant Pagan and Yunnan in the 13th century, allowed various *muang* (city-states) with Tai-speaking populations to establish small regional kingdoms in the areas of modern day

³² This critique can surely not be made of scholars studying chronicles, relics and political power in Sri Lanka. See especially: R. Gunawardana, "The Kinsmen of the Buddha: Myth as Political Charter in the Ancient and Early Medieval Kingdoms of Ceylon," in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka*, ed. Bardwell Smith (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1978): pp. 96-106. Jonathan Z. Smith more generally emphasizes the relationship between political power and relic possession in his *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

³³ Taylor's description of Nguyen Anh provides further evidence for the importance of manpower in mainland Southeast Asian warfare. Nguyen Anh, a ruler in 18th century Southern Vietnam, had served as a vassal in King Rama I's court in Bangkok, when he returned to Southern Vietnam, Taylor writes, he: "brought a new style of warfare among speakers of Vietnamese, a style of warfare that [he]...had learned while campaigning with Rama I against the Burmese. Warfare practiced by Vietnamese speakers had tended towards territorial goals, whether in acquisition or in defense, in contrast to control of manpower, as was more explicitly practiced among the Siamese. Rather than simply gaining territory to defend, Nguyen Anh attracted and governed an entourage of aspiring, competing individuals, all seeking to demonstrate their worthiness for advancement; in his "seasonal campaigns" of the early 1790's, he accumulated men more effectively than he did territories, and one wonders if that was not then his immediate priority." Taylor, "Surface Orientations," p. 967.

Thailand and Laos³⁴. Like the aforementioned regional states in early medieval India, Lanna, Lan Xang and Ayudhya existed side by side in relative peace in the 14th and 15th centuries each controlling an economically viable geographical space. No kingdom had the power to create an empire of Tai speaking peoples that could replace the Angkorian empire of the previous three centuries. However, beginning in the late 15th century Ayudhya began a systematic campaign to incorporate the kingdoms of Lanna and Lan Xang into its kingdom³⁵. The greater part of the Lanna history section of the JKM relates the reign of King Tilok (1441-1487 C.E.) who defended his kingdom against the encroachments of Ayudhyan armies under King Trailok (1448-1488 C.E.). Lanna and Ayudhya were constantly in competition for this manpower base in order to raise armies, work fields and build cities³⁶. Ayudhya's power had been growing because it was able to attract a large, mobile workforce³⁷. Ayudhya was founded in the most fertile wet-rice growing valley of Southeast Asia, this agricultural base combined with the city's river access to the sea and its royal family's connection with Chinese maritime merchants allowed Ayudhya to increase its wealth, control the major river systems in the Menam basin and attract a workforce from the Southern peninsula, Cambodia and lower Burma³⁸. Furthermore, Wheatly shows that this economic power allowed

³⁴ Martin Stuart-Fox, *The Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang: Rise and Decline* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999): pp. 32-33.

³⁵ A.B. Griswold and Praset na Nagara's study of the medieval Thai historical poem, the *Yuan Pai*, (composed around 1475 in the city of Ayudhya) reveals the extent of the use of religion as a weapon in war. The poem, as well as, the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, tells of Ayudhya using Burmese monks with magical powers to infiltrate Lanna's defenses and influence the King Tilokaraja of Chiang Mai. See their "A Siamese Historical Poem," in *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D.G.E. Hall*, ed. C.D. Cowen and O.W. Wolters (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1976): p. 139.

³⁶ Charnvit Kasetsiri, *The Rise of Ayudhya* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976): p. 102.

³⁷ Tambiah notes that it was extremely common for local Tai, Mon and Khmer peoples to move from city to city in search of work and allegiance to one city was dependent on economics. See Tambiah, *World Conquerer*, p. 121.

³⁸ Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, p. 19. Charnvit notes that Angkor saw the Menam basin of Ayudhya as the most important economic region in mainland Southeast Asia and that Chiang Mai and Sukhotai could never economically compete with their power due to this agricultural base. See also Charnvit's chapter V (Ayudhya: the Forerunner of Ayudhya) for information regarding Chinese merchants role in the power of Ayudhya. The impor-

Ayudhya to expand its “organizational capacities” beyond “the physical limits” of its urban center³⁹. Ayudhya slowly adjusted to this growing workforce by adopting old Angkorian systems of political organization. This “importance of manpower maintenance,” Kasetsiri writes, “can be seen from the regulations and laws imposed by Ayudhyan rulers to prevent the scattering of its population. For example, in the ‘Law on Abduction,’ believed to have been promulgated in 1355 during the reign of Uthong, severe penalties were specified for abductors or those who were indirectly involved in helping remove slaves or corvee labour from their assigned places.”⁴⁰ Other laws promulgated in the early 15th century demanded the return of any runaway slaves from neighbouring *muang* and punished those who housed runaway slaves. Along with these laws, the Ayudhyan kings demanded an oath of allegiance from all officials and their subjects in the outer *muang*⁴¹. In addition to these punitive devices, King Trailok extended his bureaucratic control of the population of the satellite cities of Ayudhya. He instituted a program of tattooing numbers onto the workforce to mark them as Ayudhyan and created a numerical hierarchy of classes⁴². The tattooed numbering defined the individual’s rights under Ayudhyan law⁴³. This bureaucratic system was a stark contrast to

tance of access to the sea is seen in the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*. In one episode a court astrologer interprets a dream the mother of King Mangrai had before he was born. It reads: “[T]he Lady... will bear a son most illustrious who will conquer the *lands to the south, all way to the sea*, to be sure.” Aronwut Wichienkeo and David Wyatt, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1998): p. 17.

³⁹ Paul Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery: Origins of the Southeast Asian Urban Traditions* (University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper, Nos. 207-208, 1983): p. 9. Charnvit notes that Ayudhya began to control a vast area in the 15th century, but that the historical chronicles of the later Bangkok kings exaggerate the extent of Ayudhya’s territorial control. Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁰ Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, p. 102.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103. See also: Chulalongkom, *Ruang Phraratchaphithi sipsong duan* (Bangkok: Royal Press, 1920): pp. 250-270 for evidence of the ceremonies of allegiance to the king of Ayudhya and later Cakri kings.

⁴² For a good analysis of Ayudhyan systems of social control see M.R. Akin Rabibhadana, “The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period,” a masters thesis published by the Cornell Southeast Asian Program in 1969. I thank Jeffrey Shane, PhD candidate in Southeast Asian Studies at Ohio University, for calling my attention to this source.

⁴³ See Tambiah, *World Conquerer*, 72-74.

the traditional patron-client relationship that was characteristic of Lanna political control⁴⁴.

Charnvit writes that “[I]t is clear with the foundation of Ayudhya a real centre had arisen in central Siam.”⁴⁵ Lanna kings had to defend against this new center which was expanding outwards⁴⁶. King Tilok and other monarchs of Lanna, facing an empire builder to its south, had to develop systems for the social control of a workforce. However, Lanna could not compete economically, administratively or militarily with Ayudhya’s growing power. Therefore, I surmise, it competed for manpower with the only weapon it had and the one aspect of culture the entire Tai speaking world held in common — the Buddha *sāsana*. Like the relationship between the cities of Babylon and Agade in the Ancient Near East or even the modern relationship between St. Petersburg and Moscow, Lanna had long been the cultural and religious center of mainland Southeast Asia in comparison to Ayudhya (or its predecessors Lopburi and Supanburi). Tambiah notes that Lanna attracted the most famous monks who were “the leading intellectual and cultural force in Thailand.”⁴⁷ This is important because groups of Theravada monks who regularly traveled between Pagan, Ayudhya, Phisanulok, Sukhotai, Luang Prabang and the cities of Haripuñjaya and Chiang Mai of Lanna brought cohesiveness to the cultural world. By establishing monasteries kings could attract these monks to reside in their city. Famous monks attracted large groups of labourers. Not dissimilar from today, medieval monasteries were the cultural centers of their respective towns and villages. In fact, the historical chronicles claim that most cities were founded by traveling religious figures.

⁴⁴ See Keith Taylor, “The Early Kingdoms,” in *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992): p. 171.

⁴⁵ Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, p. 93.

⁴⁶ Trainor notes that J.Z. Smith’s assessment of the mobile nature of the “locative specificity” of the sacred “center” on account of the portability of a relic is more accurate than Eliade’s well-known study of cosmological patterns which grounds the “center” in one place within a greater cosmological map. See Kevin Trainor, *Relics, Ritual and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravada Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997): pp. 105-106; see also Smith, *To Take Place*, chps. 1 & 5.

⁴⁷ See Tambiah, *World Conquerer*, pp. 76, 125. Here Tambiah emphasizes that South-east Asian kingdoms used cultural prestige to attract population.

For example, Lao legends and chronicles assert that Luang Prabang was founded by a religious ascetic. In the JKM and CDV, the sage, Vasudeva founded Haripuñjaya and installed Queen Camadevi on the throne⁴⁸. Charnvit provides a good description of how monks and *phakao* (non-ordained, traveling Buddhist *ṛṣi*) attracted people to their temples⁴⁹. He writes:

“[A] number of factors which made resettlement or expansion of the city possible should be considered. In first place, the *phakao* could persuade clansmen and monks to come to the new settlement because he could claim that it was a centre of Buddhism; and he strengthened this claim by building a new temple to house Buddhist monks. His clansmen, later followed by non-relatives, came to the new site because it offered new opportunities with plenty of land available for cultivation. Settlement in a new centre of Buddhist religion or attachment to a Buddhist temple, according to old practice of the Menam Basin, were grounds for exemption from corvee labour. Those who became kha-phra or temple slaves were no longer eligible to be drafted for corvee labour by any ruler. They worked only for a temple and its monks, and the service required by the Buddhist order was considerably

⁴⁸ Charnvit writes: “[T]hey ṛṣis, chipakao or other Buddhist and Brahmanic holy men] commanded the respect of local people because of their Indian learning... They tended to act as a sources of legitimation for established rulers of the area.” Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, p. 42. He also refers to the *Chronicle of Nakorn Sri Thammarat* which reports that that city was founded by phakao. The story of Vasudeva’s founding of the city of Haripunjaya is found in the *Camadevivamsa*. See Swearer “Myth, Legend and History in the Northern Thai Chronicles,” *JSS*, vol. 62 (1974): 75-79 regarding this story. Swearer notes that the legitimacy for Haripuñjaya is established in three stages. First, the Buddha deposits his relic. Second, Vasudeva founds the city with magical intuition (generated by his compassion) of its wealth. Third, Queen Cama was the first ruler chosen by Vasudeva because of her piety and virtue. When she marches into the city she is accompanied by 500 bhikkhus, 500 ascetics, 500 scribes, 500 sculptors, etc. See also Sommai Premcit, “Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon,” in *Buddhism in Northern Thailand*, ed. Saeng Chandranngaam (Chiang Mai: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1980): p. 75. Sommai notes that the Kings of Chiang Mai used the erection of Buddhist monuments and images as occasions to invite Bhikkhus from all over the Theravada world to come to Chiang Mai. For example, King Yod Chiang Rai in 1492 built the *Tapodarama* and invited the famous monks Veluvana Thera, Nanabodhi Thera, Surasiha Thera, Narada Thera and Saddhammasanthira Thera to consecrate the *sīma*.

⁴⁹ Archaimbault’s study of hagiographical legends in Laos reveals the importance of the non-ordained religious ascetics, magicians and soothsayers in Lan Xang, generally called “phu mi bun” (literally: person possessing merit). See Charles Archaimbault, *Contribution à l’étude d’un cycle de legendes Lao* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1980): pp. 105-123.

less strenuous than demanded by kings or rulers...As for the ruler or king who authorized a new settlement [or new temple] of this kind, he supported it because it provided him with a way of expanding his realm and heightening his prestige largely by concentrating and increasing his pool of manpower. Support of religious activities such as the construction of temples became one way of guaranteeing that manpower was within reach of command. Buddhist temples had become a binding force which tied the population together and this was one of the basic concerns of the rulers in the area. It must be noted that not everyone settled around a temple could escape corvee labour...a ruler usually had ways of preventing the number of *kha-phra* from increasing beyond certain limits."⁵⁰

We saw that the last section of the JKM reads as a simple record of how the Lanna king sponsored the building of temples, made additions and expanded living quarters at old ones and invited monks to live, teach, perform ceremonies, copy scripture and consecrate images at the temples. The traditional relationship between the monarchy and the *saṅgha* in the Theravada has been discussed by Ishii, Jackson, Mus, Tambiah and Wyatt⁵¹. Swearer and Sommai's specific study of the reigns of Lanna monarchs in the 15th and 16th centuries unequivocally establishes this link. Referring to Tilok they write:

"Tilokaraja is the great unifier of northern Thailand. Historically, the increasing dominance of the Sihala Nikāya facilitates this role. Furthermore, the king is surrounded by the symbols of a universal monarch [relics, monasteries, Buddha images, palaces, cedis, etc] which enhance both the sacrality and magical power of his territory. The Buddha and the gods support his reign. Of all the monarchs of Lanna Tilokaraja best exemplifies efforts to build a single moral community unified on the sociological level by a common religious institution, and symbolically by his own person as *cakkavattin*. His reign, then, embodies...the symbiosis between the religious and political spheres, and lays the groundwork for the golden age of Buddhist scholarship in Lanna during the reign of Phra Muang Kaew (1495-1528)."⁵²

⁵⁰ Kasetsiri, *The Rise*, pp. 42-43.

⁵¹ See especially Sommai Premchit, "Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon," 81-82; and, Yoneo Ishii, *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*, trans. Peter Hawkes (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1986): pp. 59-65.

⁵² Donald Swearer and Sommai Premchit, "The Relationship between the Religious and Political Orders in Northern Thailand (14th to 16th centuries)," in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma*, ed. Bardwell Smith (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1978): p. 31.

The JKM explicitly associates the connection between the various Lanna kings and the Asokan model of ideal the *cakkavattin*, who by protecting and patronizing the *saṅgha* ensures the success of the kingdom and the propagation of the *sāsana*⁵³. Kings, like Adicca and Jetthadhipati, built large monasteries which, Ratanapañña tells us, attracted the leading members of all three Tai speaking Theravada orders⁵⁴. These scholastic monks attracted novice students and the monasteries grew⁵⁵. For example, an inscription from Lanna reveals that one of the most famous monks of medieval Theravada Buddhism, Sumana (a Sihlabhikkhu monk of the Mahasami Udumbara order and abbot of the Ambavanarama monastery in Sukhothai) was invited to Haripuñjaya where King Kilana (1355-1385) built him a new monastery⁵⁶. Sumana was believed to have discovered a relic of a Buddha through following instructions from a tree-spirit. He gained

⁵³ There is inscriptional evidence from Sukhotai which reveal that as early as the 14th century kings were appointing the Sangharaja and abbots of particular temples. See Griswold and Prasert, "Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 12, Inscription 9," *JSS*, vol. 59, no. 1 (1971): 97-98.

⁵⁴ These orders were the Sihlabhikkhus (forest monks who were considered the most prestigious in medieval Southeast Asian Theravada); the village dwelling monks and the Brah Rupa about which little is known. A good description of the origins of the differences of these orders is found in the *Tamnan Munlasatsana's* of *Wat Suan Dok, Pa Daeng and Yang Duang*. They are based on ordination lineages, the manner in which the alms bowl is carried when on alms rounds, rules regarding the handling of money, pronunciation of Pali, and the performance of certain ceremonies. For example, see Prasert's (1994) central Thai edition of the *Munlasatsana Wat Suan Dok*, 18-20 and 28-36; and, Sanguan Chotsukrat, *Tamnan Muang Nua* (Krung Thep: Odiansadon, 2508 [1965]): pp. 451-455. Clearly our best source for understanding the Buddhist sects/schools in medieval Lan Xang, Lanna, Sukhotai and Ayudhya is found in the *Tamnan Mulasasana Wat Pa Daeng* (see note #32).

⁵⁵ Formerly, Lopburi, the Angkorian capital of the Menam Basin before the rise of Ayudhya had been a formidable learning center (the Northern Kings Ramkhamaeng, Mangrai and Ngammuang might have studied there) and slowly declined in the 15th century with the rise of schools in Ayudhya. Griswold and Prasert note that the famous ascetic from Chiang Mai traveled to Ayudhya in the 1320's to look for the *Tripitaka*, but there is no evidence for Ayudhya's place as a center of Buddhist learning after this point. Not until the sack of Chiang Mai by the Burmese in the late 16th century do we have evidence of Ayudhya as a place noted for Buddhist scholarship. See A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, "Epigraphical and Historical Studies, No. 10, King Lodaiya of Sukhodaya and His Contemporaries," *JSS*, vol. 60, no. 1 (1972): 24.

⁵⁶ A.B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, "Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 13, the Inscription of Wat Pra Yun," *JSS*, vol. 62, part 1 (1974): 123-124; and, "Epigraphical and Historical Studies, No. 12, Inscription 9," pp. 93-96.

many followers and brought the relic to Lanna. Therefore, he was able to attract many of his old students and brought prestige to the city that can be seen from the building of a cetiya which he inscribed⁵⁷.

The JKM, especially in the story of the crow, repeatedly emphasizes that the reason monks were attracted to the temples of Lanna and to the cities of Chiang Mai and Haripuñjaya was the existence of relics⁵⁸. It was believed that one could gain merit by being near and paying homage to the relics of the Buddha. As Swearer showed, Lanna's historical chronicles recorded the establishment of eight of the 12 known major relics of the Buddha. Therefore when kings built stupas to house these relics and monasteries to protect them they were simultaneously competing for the most valuable commodity of Southeast Asia — labor. The Lanna chronicles continually emphasize the great number of people who were attracted to the temples in Lanna and how the kings constantly endeavored to build new monasteries in the Lanna towns of Chiang Tung, Chiang Saen, Lampun, Chiang Rai, etc. for famous teachers like Nanagamabhira and Dhammakitti. At one point Chiang Mai had over 500 monasteries all attracting new ordinations, temples slaves and construction workers⁵⁹. Moreover, these reliquaries became major pilgrimage sites and by locating them in Lanna, monks and laypeople could travel to them in succession, hence solidifying the various religious centers of the kingdom and increasing the self-definition of Lanna as a spatial designation⁶⁰. The JKM describes the establishment of these religious centers and the king's unwavering patronage of them in detail and herein lays its political subtext.

The JKM's historical narrative claims temporal and spatial authenticity for Lanna. It emphasized the region's possession of the Buddha's relics

⁵⁷ In the *Tamnan Muang Nua* we find an episode where Sumana is invited as the "most eminent swami [and] head of the sangha in Lanna Thai of the Sri Lankan sect" to reside in Chiang Mai by the king. See Sanguan, *Tamnan Muang Nua*, p. 457.

⁵⁸ For more information regarding the cult of relics in the Theravada world and the establishment of "presence" or local religious prestige, see especially Trainor's *Relics, Ritual and Representation*, pp. 96-135.

⁵⁹ Swearer and Sommai, "The Relationship between the Religious and Political Orders," pp. 28-30.

⁶⁰ Almost no work has been conducted on pilgrimage in Lanna or Lan Xang. For a general study of pilgrimage and the definition of sacred space see *Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces*, ed. Robert Stoddard and Alan Morris (Baton Rouge: LSU, 1997).

and depicted the lineage of Lanna kings as true Aśokan protectors of the Theravada. In this way the JKM can be analyzed as Foucault analyzed the written historical records of disciplinary institutions. Foucault saw history writing as attempts to negotiate power. Through meticulous detail written histories revealed the “coherence of a tactic” which seeks to establish absolute authority for the factual history⁶¹. Therefore, when reading history, Foucault writes: “one’s point of reference...[should be] to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of meaning.”⁶² This notion of history as weapon was also asserted by

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977): p. 139. Thai historian, Satién Goset, disagrees with this notion and sees the writing of history as pedagogical in aim and nature. See his “Wicha Brawattisat,” *Silapakorn* 1, no. 3 (1957): 70-74.

⁶² Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): p. 114. Foucault’s theories on historiography and power help us understand the JKM. These theories come from his work on *Discipline and Punish* and *Power/Knowledge* in the mid-seventies. His later work in the *History of Sexuality* sees in the writing of history the efforts to make a “perceived enemy” in history writing, like Ayudhya, into something wholly “other.” There is much evidence in the JKM and other Northern Thai chronicles and inscriptions that the Lanna historians saw Ayudhya as non-Tai and thus not as legitimate rulers of Tai-speaking peoples. Keith Taylor is the only scholar that I have come across that explicitly notes the two “versions” of being Tai — the Lanna version and the Ayudhyan. Ayudhya was located in the former center of the Angkor Empire and its administration, royal ceremonies and laws were distinctly Angkorian (Taylor, “The Early Kingdoms,” p. 171). The Lanna *Sinhanavati Chronicle* emphasizes the enmity between the kings of Lanna and Angkor and glorifies the saving of “the independence” of Lanna from the Khmers. See Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Vol. I., p. 146. There is much inscriptional evidence that would suggest that Ayudhyan kings saw themselves as culturally Khmer. An inscription in Northeast Thailand that was inscribed in 1562 in which the Ayudhyan authorities used Khmer characters for writing in Thai. In fact, Ayudhyan royal inscriptions in Chainat (Central Thailand) used Khmer script until 1717, even though Thai script had been developed and used in the region since approximately 1296. Since Lanna had its own script different from the central Thai script since the 13th century, Ayudhyan kings could have used the central Thai script for inscriptions to set themselves apart from Lanna, but explicitly chose to use Khmer. See Michael Vickery, “Review of *Prachum Chotmaihet Samai Ayuthaya Phak I*,” *JSS*, vol. 60, part 2 (1972): 31; see also Griswold and Prasert, “Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 12, Inscription 9,” p. 89; and, see Justin McDaniel, “New Perspectives on Scripts and Inscriptions in Northern Thailand and Laos,” paper presented at the National Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Portland, OR: 2000. Linguistically it is now believed that Tai Yuan (spoken in Lanna), Luang Pabang Lao and Isan were very similar in the early medieval period and distinctive from Central Ayudhyan Thai. See Suchita

Mary Douglas' analysis of a conception of pollution, that, Pelley writes: "fixates on boundaries and that insistently distinguishes between internal and external; danger always presses in from the outside. Douglas supposes that ideas about external transgression function primarily to 'impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without...that a semblance of order is created.'"⁶³

Wongtet, "Kamnamsaneur," in *Mahagap Kong Usakanae Tao Hung Kun Cheung Wirburussongfangkong*, ed. Suchita Wongtet (Bangkok: Singhakom, 1985): p. 17. Sketchy cartographical evidence is inconclusive. Ayudhya mapmakers associated themselves and their kingdom with Old Angkor. Victor Kennedy found a rare map from Ayudhya which mapped out Khmer territory and areas in Northeast Thailand and Central Laos, but was vague or completely neglectful of any territory in Lanna north of Phisanulok. This may only be due to a lack of opportunities to survey Lanna as it was occupied by the Burmese in the late 16th century, but since the map was produced as late as the 19th century, it seems to point out that Ayudhya considered the mapping of Khmer areas along with central Thailand more important. Tongchai Winichakul has studied a map found by Michael Wright which at the time of writing I was not able to acquire or consult. Tongchai's comments suggest that it depicts Lanna territory as part of Ayudhya; however, I am not aware of the proximate dating or subject of the map. See Victor Kennedy, "An Indigenous Early Nineteenth Century Map of Central and Northeast Thailand," *JSS Special Volume in Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhon*, ed. Tej Bunnag and Michael Smithies (1970): 317; and Tongchai, *Siam Mapped*, p. 26. Much further work needs to be done.

⁶³ See Patricia Pelley, "The History of Resistance and the Resistance to History in Post-Colonial Constructions of the Past, in *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts*, ed. Keith Taylor and John Whitmore (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995): p. 243. See also Wheeler, "Challenges to Narrative History," p. 2. Note also that Douglas is explicit in her support of Durkheim's conception of religion as "eminently social." Douglas believed that the human structure of thought was socially constructed. Looking specifically at notions of purity and impurity in *Leviticus*, she emphasizes that ancient Jewish society determined something "holy" or pure by its "wholeness" or "completeness" and by how well it fit into a pre-determined class, see Mary Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus," in *Purity and Danger* (New York: Praeger, 1966): p. 51. She provides this cogent example:

"[T]he [Israelite] army could not win without the blessing [of God] and to keep the blessing in the camp they had to be specially holy. So the camp was to be preserved from defilement like the Temple...all bodily discharges disqualified a man from entering the camp...[a] warrior who had an issue of the body in the night should keep outside the camp all day and only return after sunset, having washed...[I]n short the idea of holiness was given external, physical expression in the wholeness of the body seen as a perfect container" (Ibid., pp. 51-52).

Furthermore, holiness was bestowed upon that which fell under distinct "categories of creation;" it involves "correct definition, discrimination and order" (Ibid., p. 53). Therefore, the pig was considered impure, because it did not fit into the category of cattle, camels, sheep and goats which produced milk and hides (Ibid., pp. 54-55). Pigs are cloven animals, but do not possess all the qualities that make up the class of milk and hide

This is exactly what the JKM did. We saw that the JKM heavily focuses on the detail of the establishment of relics and the building of temples

producers. In this way they were considered hybrid creatures, as were flying quadrupeds, reptiles (who live on land, but do not have feet) and other various anomalous creatures. These creatures were seen as symbols of unholiness or impurity. Symbols, for Douglas, reflected a society's attempt at making meaning and that structure of meaning-making was socially determined. Understanding what a society designated as pure or impure allows understanding of their conceptions of universal order and their notions of the relationship between the divine and the human. Douglas does not expand on how structures of thought which lead to the production of symbols originate, how new symbols can reflect new structures of thought, or how new structures of thought are possible without a change in the social structure. Turner attempts to answer these questions. He agrees with Douglas' claim that symbols of impurity are determined in some ways by the things that remain outside of classification, like neophytes, who are neither adult nor children. In fact, he expands Douglas' point by emphasizing how designating something or someone as symbolically deviant actually reifies the social structure by determining societal boundaries. See Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. William Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965): p. 342. For example, neophytes, the "symbolically invisible" must be taught the "sacra" of a society — its notions of theogony, cosmogony and mythical history (Ibid., p. 343). They are taught culture, hence continually establishing what defines culture (Ibid., 346). However, unlike Douglas, Turner understood the dynamic nature of societies and symbolic production. He believes that anthropologists have been too concerned with stable and fixed structures instead of processes in which the relation between a symbol and its referent and between an individual and society is continually being changed. For example, a pilgrimage can serve as a process in which social structure is transformed. He writes:

"[A]s a pilgrim moves away from his structural involvements at home his route becomes increasingly sacralized at one level and increasingly secularized at another. He meets with more shrines and sacred objects as he advances, but he also encounters more real dangers such as bandits and robbers, he has to pay attention to the need to survive and often to earn money for transportation, and he comes across markets and fairs...where the shrine is flanked by the bazaar...but all these things are more contractual, more associational, more volitional, more replete with the novel and the unexpected." See Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974): pp. 182-83).

In other places he showed how caste rules were relaxed and new relationships formed in Saivite pilgrimages and obligations were relaxed, leading to new rule formation, in Islamic pilgrimages. For Turner, the pilgrimage served the same purpose as the neophyte "anti-structure." Through it society transformed itself, created new religious symbolic associations and questioned the existing social structure. Since Turner saw symbols as meaning-making, we can surmise that his understanding of the transformation of symbolic status would lead necessarily to subtle transformations in the structure of thought in a community. In this way, Turner clarifies the relationship between the individual and the social and the former's ability to transform social structure and symbolic status — something both Douglas (and Geertz) failed to adequately explain. Using analogies to drama,

in its claim to authenticity. This claim was essential to Lanna's fight for independence. Lanna and Ayudhya were in a state of constant warfare in the 15th and 16th centuries. Lanna needed, as historian Keith Taylor notes in 1992, to create a "distinctive regional cultural identity" vis-à-vis its neighbours. I suggest that the writing of history was one of the tools to do that. The JKM can be understood as a weapon in the war with Ayudhya in the context of our understanding of Lanna's difficult economic position, its efforts to remain an independent regional state when faced with a growing empire on its borders, the scarcity of manpower in Southeast Asia, the supreme cultural value placed on relics and the importance of monasteries as population centers⁶⁴. The literary claim to regional authenticity established through linear time and the sacralization of place was a claim to political survival, not simply a recording of religious history for didactic purposes as Charnvit, Wyatt, Swearer, Vickery and others have assumed.

This use of the genre of history also reflects an alternative type of what Pollock called, "vernacularization;" namely, it took a cosmopolitan text-type, the Pali "*vaṃsa*" Buddhist histories of Sri Lanka and used the literary structure of that text-type for its own political purposes. The JKM was composed in a "cosmopolitan" or classical language. However, it "vernacularizes," or perhaps regionalizes the Pali source text, the *Mahāvamsa*, by manipulating the history so that Lanna would appear simultaneously as temporally connected to Sri Lanka and India and spatially superior to Ayudhya. This "vernacularization/regionalization" achieves its

Turner challenges other anthropologists to see societies as dynamic historical processes. However, he leaves his readers unclear as to how the study of religion is different from other meaning-making systems in a cultural system. His analysis of pilgrimages implicitly suggests that he saw no important distinction between a religious perspective and an economic or aesthetic one.

⁶⁴ Keyes notes that Lanna was being attacked from all sides as early as the time of Ratanapañña. In his "New Evidence on Northern Thai Frontier History" he notes that the Burmese had been attacking Yuan Thai/Lanna villages in the early 16th century until their final conquest in 1558. See this article in the *JSS Special Volume in Memoriam of Phya Anuman Rajadon*, pp. 230-231. I believe that this provides further evidence for the theory of the Lanna chronicles as political weapons in a time of war. We saw that the two "foreign" envoys that the JKM mentions visiting and paying homage to the Haripuñjaya relic were the King of Burma and the King of Ayudhya. Ratanapañña, *Jinakālamālī*, p. 181.

final incarnation in relic histories like the *That Phanom Chronicle* written in Lao with Tham script and the *Tamnan Phra Kaeo Morakot* originally written in Yuan Thai and translated into Pali. They mimic the genre of the Pali *Mahāvamsa* or the Pali JKM and therefore “domesticate” the cosmopolitan Pali *vamsa* text. They are composed in local languages, focus on local relic history (rather than Buddhist history beginning in India) and emphasize regional history⁶⁵. However, these relic histories are politically motivated as well if we understand the motivation to establish spatial authenticity through local possession of relics. I believe that Ratanapañña employed history, as Pollock writes discussing South Indian vernacular poets, to “define themselves in significant if variable ways on the basis of literature they share, and they create new literatures in service of new definitions.”⁶⁶ Ratanapañña by using the structure of the *Vamsa* and writing in the cosmopolitan language, linked Lanna temporally and religiously to Sri Lanka and India (i.e. to the Buddha) and used the translocal prestige of the Theravada to authenticate his region politically and religiously vis-à-vis the growing empires around it. The genre of history proved the most powerful literary weapon in their regional defense of independence. An understanding of the inter-regional political subtexts of these histories helps us to move beyond interpreting the use of cosmopolitan languages and literary codes in the vague, functionalist manner of local writers usurping prestige. Instead we can see them as conscious literary choices made in a politically charged atmosphere⁶⁷.

JKM: Conceptualizing the Local

Having briefly explained how Ratanapañña used the genre of history to establish spatial and temporal authenticity for Lanna vis-à-vis Ayudhya, we can now return to the larger issue in Buddhist studies; namely, how do we understand the possible ways in which local, pre-modern Buddhist

⁶⁵ Pollock, “The Cosmopolitan Vernacular,” pp. 8, 27.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁷ See Pollock’s critique of the prevailing “paradigm for understanding the social foundations of Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture, namely, legitimation theory and its logic of instrumental reason: Elites in command of new forms of social power deployed the mystifying symbols and codes of Sanskrit somehow to secure consent.” *Ibid.*, p. 13.

historians conceived of time and place outside Eurocentric conceptions of nation? In the previous two sections we saw how Ratanapañña simultaneously emphasized Lanna as a spatially unique place in relation to Ayudhya and temporally connected to the origins of the Buddhist *sāsana* in the context of the ongoing inter-regional war. Does this thesis reify modern conceptions of the “nation” or the “regional identity” and project them onto a pre-modern Buddhist history writer? It does if I assume that Ratanapañña had conscious, pre-formed notions of regional identity. This is exactly what I do not assume. I want to make a distinction between conceptions of regional identity and conceptions of the *sāsana* on the one hand and a distinction between local histories based on local identity and local histories based on state formation on the other. I am asserting that the *sāsana* existed as a conceptual category, even though explicit conceptions of local identity may not have. Ratanapañña continually emphasized that temples, lineages, relics and texts that were created or resided in Lanna were connected to the Buddha *sāsana*. By reciting these histories publically, establishing the authenticity of relics and images and constructing massive temple complexes that generated employment, the monarchs and intellectuals of Lanna created a “*sāsana* community” or a regional expression of the *sāsana*, which the populace identified with and profited from and which intellectuals praised and rulers supported⁶⁸. The *sāsana*, as I have suggested, was the only conceptual category that had commerce among the different regional kingdoms in mainland Southeast Asia.

⁶⁸ Obeyesekere only mentions the “obligatory pilgrimage” as the “crucial mechanism” of *sāsana* identity and the forming of a “moral community” among the masses in South Asia. By providing the example of the village of Rambadeniya in Northeastern Sri Lanka, he shows that villagers have Buddhist rituals which create and continually reinforce their identity as Buddhists, but when they go on a pilgrimage to a neighbouring village, they acknowledge that they are no longer under the care of their “local deity but under the aegis of another whose sima or boundry...[they] are now crossing” (p. 32). As they move from one space to another they are joined by other pilgrims. I agree with Obeyesekere on this ability of pilgrimage to form a *sāsana* community, and we saw that happening in 16th century Lanna as monks and laypeople and rulers moved from reliquary to reliquary on pilgrimage and created a sacred space and expanded their local urban and village boundaries into regional boundaries. However, in this case of Lanna, there were other “crucial mechanisms,” like: the movement of monks for scholarship purposes, the parade of images and the recitation of a regional historical chronicles within the boundaries of a region, which created and repeatedly defined Lanna as a *sāsana* and political region. See Obeyesekere, “Buddhism, Nationhood and Cultural Identity,” pp. 31-34.

Therefore, claiming a space within the *sāsana* vis-à-vis neighbouring “Buddhist” kingdoms was a political statement grounded temporally and spatially. In this way, I agree with Obeyesekere’s notion that the *sāsana* had a “family” resemblance to categories of nation or polity and that, *contra* Anderson, pre-modern Asian, rulers, literati and people had conceptions of identity that were in some ways analogous to the concept of the “nation” or were evolutionary pre-cursors to that concept. The *sāsana* was a conscious concept, continually reasserted in texts, that had regional cohesive force and defined boundaries⁶⁹. It was a pre-modern conceptual category, like the Catholic conception of “the church,” with which local agents could and certainly did identify.

By claiming an unbroken and unparalleled temporal connection to the one conceptual category of identity that the religious and local leaders as well as a great deal of the masses understood and respected as forming part of their selfhood, Ratanapañña, perhaps not consciously, asserted spatial superiority and prestige for Lanna in relation to Ayudhya. Just as Indologists were forced to ask each other questions concerning the reasons why linear history is written since the discovery of the *Rājatarāṅginī*, scholars of South and Southeast Asian Buddhism, since being confronted with works like the *Mahāvamśa*, *Culavāṃsa*, *Dīpavāṃsa*, *Buddhāvāṃsa*, *Thupavāṃsa*, *Dhātuvāṃsa*, *Sāsanavāṃsa*, *Camadevivāṃsa*, *Tamnan Muang Nua*, the *Mulasāsana* and the JKM, have been concerned with Buddhist history writing and its assumed assertion of local identity⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1. Duara also asserts that their were cultural formations in pre-modern China which are analogous to modern conceptions of nations. See Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, esp. 1-29. One critique of Duara, besides Taylor’s antithetical stance, is pointed out by Wheeler, Breuilly and Hobsbawm. They show that the concept of pre-modern nations is “enormously difficult, since it implies discovering the sentiments of the illiterate who formed the overwhelming majority of the world’s population before the twentieth century. We are informed about that section of the literate who wrote as well as read — or at least some of them — but it is clearly illegitimate to extrapolate from the elite to the masses, the literate to the illiterate, even though the two worlds are not entirely separable, and the written word influenced the ideas of those who only spoke” (Hobsbawm, p. 48). See also: John Breuilly, “Approaches to Nationalism,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (New York: Verso, 1996): pp. 146-174; and, Wheeler, “Challenges to Narrative History,” p. 16.

⁷⁰ This history of the study of Kalhana’s *Rājatarāṅginī* (1148 C.E.) is particularly interesting for our study, because it shows that there is a much larger question in Indol-

What is interesting about these linear historical narratives is that they were produced in regions outside of what was generally conceived of as

ogy regarding “history writing” in South Asia in general. This debate is not particularly active today, but its focus and conclusions are an interesting contrast to the present focus of people like Anderson, Chatterjee, Duara, Taylor and Obeyesekere. When the *Rājatarāṅginī* (RTA) was discovered in a Persian translation in the 19th century, it generated great interests among Indologists, because was the first piece of Sanskrit writing that seemed to reflect a similar way (Thucydidean) of understanding history to the West; namely, a linear history written by an historian who cited and was critical of his sources. I provide a brief history of the debate here for those interested in comparison: it has been held up by Indologists since the 19th century as the only extant work of history in Sanskrit. Therefore, many scholars have used it to defend the accusation that India produced no true historians. Noting the primacy of this allegation, Sheldon Pollock writes: “[P]erhaps no issue in Indian intellectual history has been as frequently commented upon and as univocally adjudicated as the tradition’s presumed lack of historical awareness” (Sheldon Pollock, “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India,” *JAOS* 109.3 (1989): 603). The RTA seemingly stands alone and has merited much scholarly attention due to its apparent uniqueness. Most people studying the RTA describe it as a history in two ways: first, it has been labeled a “didactic” history in the way it the author seeks to imbue his narrative with timeless lessons on how polities existing in time should operate; second, its author holds an conception of time congruent with the traditional Indian understanding of negative progression; namely, that history is entropic and human morality and quality of life is becoming less and less palpable over time. Kalhana’s work has been referred to by almost every scholar of medieval Indian history or Indian historiography in general as a unique example of Indian historiography; however, very little textual study has been made of it. It has been used to confirm certain dates, create king lists, and as proof that India produced historians in the pre-colonial periods. Due to this lack of attention to the RTA, there has been almost no study of its literary features or analyses of its author’s understanding of fundamental issues in Indian political science, philosophy or ethics. Furthermore, there only has been a very superficial discussion on what type of history Kalhana produced reflecting the lack of development in the philosophy of history in modern Indology. J. N. Sarkar writes: [A]ncient India suffered from paucity of professed histories...Archives and genealogies of rulers might have been maintained in every important Hindu court. But Kashmir is the only area of India with a tradition of historical writing. The Kashmir historian, Kalhana, then author of the *Rājatarāṅginī* (wr. A.D. 1148-9), stands alone among Hindu historians” (Jagadish Narayan Sharker, *History of History Writing in Medieval India* (Calcutta: Sreenath Press, 1977): p. 2). Romila Thapar emphasizes that Kashmir is “commonly accepted” as the only region of modern India that had a flourishing tradition of historical writing and that Jonaraja and Shrivara, later medieval historians of Kashmir, simply followed Kalhana’s lead as the first attested historian of India” (Romila Thapar, “Writings in Medieval Kashmir,” in *Historians of Medieval India*, ed. Mohibbul Hasan (New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1982): p. 45). Shankar Goyal has a much broader view of what constitutes history writing in Ancient and medieval history and includes Bana’s *Harṣacarita* and the *Purāṇas* along with the RTA (Shankar Goyal, *History Writing of Early India: New Discoveries and Approaches* (Jodhpur: Kusumanjali

Jambudvipa (modern India excluding Kashmir and Assam), in modern day Sri Lanka, Southern Burma, Northern Thailand, Laos and Kashmir.

Prakashan, 1996): p. 144). However, he notes in his study of V.S. Pathak's interpretation of *carita kavyas* that in the early 19th century the RTA was often the only textual source considered reliable for reconstructing medieval Indian history by British colonial historians. M.A. Stein, the first person to introduce the RTA to English speaking world, as well as the writer of the most comprehensive commentary on Kalhana's life and work, also sees the RTA as a unique example of historical writing in India. (Stein notes that their was an English translation of the RTA completed in 1887 by Yogesh Chunder Dutt, but it is based on the corrupt manuscript of the Calcutta edition of 1835. It is lacking in information about Kashmiri geography and social institutions. See his *Kalhana's Rājatarāṅginī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*. Vol. 1. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pub., 1900): p. xiii). In the introduction to the English edition, he writes: "[I]t has often been said of the India of the Hindus that it possessed no history as a science and art, such as classical culture in its noblest prose-works has bequeathed to us...India has never known among its *Śāstras* the study of history such as Greece and Rome cultivated or as modern Europe understands it." Furthermore, he remarks that Sanskrit *kavya* has always been an "artificial product" because the demands of competition in ancient Indian literary circles and the "panegyric character" of the poems. Therefore, the RTA marks the rare occasion when Kalhana broke away from the typical demands of glorifying the past so as to legitimize the reign and power of his monarchial patron and looked at history sources critically, as Josephus, Thucydides and Heroditus (See Michael Witzel's "On Indian Historical Writing," *JJASAS* 2 (1990): 4, for a summary of historical poetry in Sanskrit pre-dating the RTA). Sukla Das has investigated the apparent uniqueness of the RTA more seriously in his efforts to explain the lack of "historical consciousness" in ancient India. He asked how the Indians could not have produced historians after having contact with the Greeks and the Chinese, who took the craft of history writing as a serious endeavor (Sukla Das, "Craft of History Writing: An Early Indian Perspective," in *Aspects of Indian History and Historiography*, ed. P.K. Misra (New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 1996): p. 226). He notes that this was a question even the first Muslim scholars in India asked, like Alberuni, who remarked upon this lack of Hindu historical works. Stein associates the RTA with a particular type of "Indian mind" (Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarāṅginī*, p. 3; and, Das, "Craft of History Writing," p. 231). Das gives ten reasons for this lack of writing based mainly on the "Indian ideal, outlook and psyche." (Ibid.). In ancient and medieval India, he states, a writer was a poet who could not abandon his craft to use historical facts to bring out "larger principles governing human affairs" (Ibid.). From here, Das believes it is necessary to show how Indians saw history and produced texts that reflected their "psyche." Das encourages the use of Kauṭilya's categories for what constitutes history, in this way, the *Itihāsa* epic history, the *Kavya* epic poetry (i.e. the *Rāmāyana*) and the *Purāṇas* would all be considered history along with the *Harṣacarita* and the RTA as examples of how Indians saw their place in the movement of time. It is not my concern here to comment on the possibility that there is an Indian "psyche" or a particular Indian "outlook" that we identify, especially by ignoring the regional qualities of the mass of literature that Das refers to as possessing some pervasive "Indian" understanding of history. However, what Das does impress upon our study of the RTA is that it can neither be looked at as the only

Obeyskere demonstrates how the chronicles in Sri Lanka used the “fairly constant” ideology of the Buddhist *sāsana* to legitimate the generally “politically unstable” rule of the various regional Sri Lankan kingdoms

“true” piece of Sanskrit history writing and that there are qualities to the RTA which deserve fuller treatment. He writes: “[H]is objective approach is striking as he made no attempt to conceal the failings of the king Harsa that evoke condemnation in spite of his family gratitude for the king. This boldness can in no way be underrated. History according to Kalhana was not something to learn but to make people live and understand life. He portrayed both sides of all issues and pointed out the failings of the faulty monarch” (Ibid.). If the RTA is to remain relevant to South Asian scholars then it must be willing to increase the number and variety of questions we ask when reading it. Michael Witzel shows through a much more in depth study of little known historical works in Sanskrit that labeling the RTA as unique is misleading. He has found that Indians have had a sense of history as reflected in whole classes of texts that have been ignored by Indologists. On the question of the Indian “sense of history,” Witzel notes that inherent in the Sanskrit language is a sense of the past; namely, there are several past tenses. Furthermore, he shows that history can be thought of and recorded even within a cosmological system that considers time as cyclical. Even though *yugas* may be repetitive, the history of the present *yuga* (i.e. the one the historian lives in) can be viewed historically (Witzel, “On Indian Historical Writing,” pp. 5-7). Besides looking at *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and the Epics, as well as inscriptions, coins and the historical value of manuscript colophons, he describes the *vāmsavalī* texts (Ibid., p. 12). The *vāmsavalīs*, of which the *Goparājavāmsavalī* is the greatest surviving example, are dynastic lists of individual dynasties which show similarities to *paramparas* and *vāmsas* in Pali, Thai, Singhalese, Lao, etc. These *vāmsavalīs* were not merely king lists like those found in Sumeria, but “included many other events, such as important data on foundations, etc. . . [I]n these records are mentioned good and evil events, with calamities and fortunate occurrences” (Ibid., p. 20). In fact, Witzel notes, Kalhana referred to *vāmsavalīs* in the RTA (Ibid., p. 33; see also Stein’s *Kalhana’s Rājatarāṅginī*, pp. 21-24, for a description of Kalhana’s sources). Therefore, Witzel concludes that “the lack of historical writings and the alleged lack of historical sense is due, in large measure, more to the accidents of medieval history than to the religious and philosophical tenets of Indian civilization (Ibid., p. 41). Pollock (1989) also disagrees with the idea that Indians possessed a “non-historical” mentality. Citing Ricoeur, he notes that “narrative itself is the linguistic form of human temporal existence” (604). He emphasizes that we must abandon the notion that a work of history can only be defined as such by the extent to which it presents an “objective investigation of facts” and see more how historical narrative distances itself from literary narrative (604). From this theoretical argument he moves on to cite issues in Indian intellectual history which contributed to the reluctance to produce works of history (which do not relate to any sort of un-historical Indian worldview). He demonstrates that the *Mīmāṃsā* school of philosophy posited that the Vedas were inviolably true because they did not have a “referential intention” to anything temporal/historical. If they did, they would be fallible (i.e. non-eternal). All subsequent literature in India, most especially the *MBh* (or the “Fifth Veda”) was genetically linked to the Vedas, a “process which we may call vedicization, that is in fact culture-wide” (609).

(*rajarata*-royal province)⁷¹. The *Mahāvamsa* and others described the Buddha's magical visits to the island, his predictions of relic emergence and the rulers' protection of those relics. Obeyesekere admits that these "charter myths" or "foundational stories" are common all over the world, but he states that the Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicles are different because they use the *sāsana* as "validation" to their authenticity⁷². They created Sri Lanka as an "imagined space" inhabited by diverse peoples under the umbrella of the *sāsana* occupying a bounded space⁷³. As we saw, the JKM uses similar stories to connect itself to the *sāsana* and define itself as a legitimate Buddhist space.

The question remains: why would these border areas need to write history to negotiate space within the conceived *sāsana*? Understanding the general commerce of the *sāsana* as a prestigious, legitimizing force in Southeast Asia, we can suggest that the leaders of these regions needed history as a genre because the kingdoms they ruled were newly emerging polities in the midst of regional wars and threatened by expansionist states on their borders. The Buddha *sāsana* was the only cohesive force in Southeast Asia in the medieval period and the rulers of these respective regions desired to establish a connection to the *sāsana* that would mark them as superior to their neighbours. Although Ratanapañña may have not been conscious of a concept of region or state and there is no Pali word that can be translated as "nation" in our modern sense of the term, he was conscious of the *sāsana* as an entity. Understanding the historical context and the observing how Ratanapañña defined Lanna as a sacred space, temporally connected to the Buddha *sāsana*, we can see the JKM's political subtext and how it could have been employed as a tool in "Buddhist" state formation. Ratanapañña may not have held a conscious conception of "Lannaness," but his text creates this identity as a spatial and temporal regional entity within the *sāsana*. By affiliating local lineages, relics and texts with the *sāsana*, history writers in the various medieval kingdoms in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand and Laos claimed space within the *sāsana*. This claim can be seen as moving from the religious to the political in the case of the JKM and sixteenth century Lanna.

⁷¹ Obeyesekere, "Buddhism, Nationhood and Cultural Identity," pp. 21-22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Nihon Ryōiki: *Miracle Tales and the Common Man*

As we saw from the examples cited above, Kyōkai's collection of miraculous tales about Buddhists in 8th and 9th century Japan focuses on the ways in which common women and men participated in the Buddhist world. This collection marked a change in Japanese Buddhist narratives from tales of the origin of Buddhism through gifts of images and texts from Korea to elite families in the *Nihon Shoki* (720 c.e.) and *Kojiki* (712 c.e.). Unlike Ratanapañña, Kyōkai did not want to write a history that would legitimate the state and elite ecclesiastic control of the Buddhist *sāsana*. He wanted to liberate the practice and study of Buddhism from that control.

The Heian period marked a change in the Imperial government's relation to the Buddhist ecclesiastic organization. By the end of the Nara period, certain elite monks residing at Imperial temple complexes had a powerful influence on the government. Buddhism enjoyed royal favour and Buddhist monks served as royal envoys, advisors and scribes. Over-time that service for the government transformed itself into control of the government culminating in the "Dōkyō incident," when the retired empress was rumored to be having an illicit affair with a court monk named Dōkyō. He encouraged the retired empress to usurp the throne from the child emperor. After she did and had the emperor killed, Dōkyō attempted to usurp power from her. He was unsuccessful, but Emperor Kammu moved the capital from Nara to Nagaoka to Kyoto to remove the court from the detrimental influence of the powerful, elite saṅgha. Kammu issued dozens of imperial decrees that limited the power of the saṅgha. Between 798 and 804 c.e., many decrees attacked monks who were married and were not maintaining the precepts outlined in the *Vinaya* and preserved in Japan by the Ritsu school. Kitagawa notes that the "line of demarcation between the upper and lower strata that characterized society during the Nara period continued to exist in the Heian period. The aristocrats and clergy were two main 'bearers of culture.'"⁷⁴ Aristocrats had economic privileges in the form of material gifts from the emperor, land

⁷⁴ Joseph Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966): p. 53.

and servants. They also paid fewer taxes and had less severe punishments for crimes. Landholders' wealth increased dramatically and the large manors that were created and their own elite schools. This stratification of society was also seen in the stratification of the saṅgha. The Heian period was characterized by "extreme clericalism." Monkhood was seen as the only way open to certain ranks in society of moving up the social ladder, so Nakamura writes that many people "entered temples not in search for the truth but in quest for worldly riches and privileges."⁷⁵ Temples themselves became powerful landholders. Not only did the emperor order monasteries to reserve land for the housing of old and infirm nuns and monks, but lay landowners would donate much of their land to monasteries to make their land exempt from taxes and to gain merit⁷⁶. "In other words," Kitagawa writes, "the aristocracy and the clergy needed each other for their mutual benefit, and they supported each other."⁷⁷

It is against this background that we must see the work of Kyōkai. The only two major works in French, German or English on Kyōkai are by K.M. Nakamura and William LaFleur. I will be citing from Nakamura's study and translation of the NR and LaFleur's long article "In and Out of Rokudō: Kyōkai and the Formation of Medieval Japan" extensively. However, I am approaching the NR from a different direction. Nakamura, although providing a short overview of the possible and generalized Chinese literary influences on the NR and discussing the scholarly controversy surrounding the dating of the text, looks at the text solely as a didactic source for ethical lessons. Like LaFleur, his project is to see the NR as an example of early Japanese Buddhist literary prowess and burgeoning moralism. LaFleur's study follows Nakamura in that it studies the NR only for its ideological stances; however, he does acknowledge the "revolution in thought" that the NR may have worked to initiate. He sees this revolution in terms of the NR's emphasis on the notion of karma. This use of historical narrative through a collection of tales from

⁷⁵ Ibid.: p. 56.

⁷⁶ See Kiyoshi Inoue, *Geschichte Japans: Aus dem Japanischen und mit einem Vorwort von Manfred Hubricht* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1993): pp. 71-79. He gives detailed information on the various privileges temples held in terms of landholding, taxes and slaves in the late Nara and early Heian period.

⁷⁷ Ibid.: p. 57.

the past was a unique way to stress the dangers of karmic retribution in Japanese literature and harkens back to Pali *Jātakas*. Even though the genre was relatively new to Japanese writers, LaFleur asserts that the perception of the world in terms of karma was shared by his contemporaries, so “the wide sharing of this interpretation of reality is what makes it possible to speak of the medieval episteme in Japan.”⁷⁸ Therefore, the NR “may not have single-handedly changed the mind of the Japanese, it did much to shape the epistemic possibilities of medieval Japan.”⁷⁹ This view of the NR shows that LaFleur saw the significance of the text, but he strangely does not suggest any political ramifications Kyōkai might have intended or what politico-societal polemical stance he might have held. Therefore, LaFleur’s interpretations of different stories in the NR, including the story of the girl who holds a Buddha relic in her fist, are relegated to the way they reflect how karma operates in the world⁸⁰.

Both LaFleur and Nakamura’s relatively ahistorical literary approaches have considerable merit as they both provide informed thematic studies of the ethical issues broached in the stories and, in the case of LaFleur, their place within trends of Japanese religious thought. What they do not provide the reader with, however, is a historicist view which would allow his audience to see the context and hence the possible ideological systems Kyōkai reflected or was attempting to create. The neo-historicist view, expounded by Foucault, does not endeavour to simply see how the writer

⁷⁸ William LaFleur, “In and Out of Rokudō: Kyōkai and the Formation of Medieval Japan,” in *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan*, ed. William LaFleur (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983): p. 33.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41. LaFleur’s analysis of the story of the girl who is born with relics of the Buddha in her fist emphasizes the author’s understanding of karma and then shows how it reflects traditional Japanese notions of Buddhist cosmology. The interactions between Buddha’s, gods, hell-beings and humans in this story and others show how karma effected the transmigration of the soul through the various levels of the Buddhist cosmos. Furthermore, it shows an attempt by Kyōkai to make Buddhism fit in with certain Shinto notions of the universe. In this way, LaFleur sees the NR as being part of the larger medieval religious episteme of the effort to syncretize Shinto and Buddhism. See also Fanny Hagin Mayer, “Religious Elements in Japanese Folk Tales,” in *Studies in Japanese Culture*, ed. Joseph Roggendorf (Tokyo: Sophia Univ. Press, 1963): pp. 1-16. Mayer gives a similar analysis of oral folktales collected by Sasaki Kizen between 1886 and 1933 in Iwate prefecture.

was influenced or reflected the “spirit of his age,” but to “reconstruct, in methodical ways, the differential and contradictory patterns within which...works constitute themselves and are constituted.”⁸¹ Taking this approach, I cannot limit myself to a pure literary study, but instead must see the overdetermined ideological, sociological, political, economic and literary world in which Kyōkai worked. This approach combined with an affinity to Foucaultian understandings of history writing as negotiations in a power dynamic allows me to move beyond Nakamura’s literary analysis to a see the NR as having political, economic and sociological motives and, I believe, implications. This approach is taken by scholars of Japanese literature, like Michele Marra and Hermann Ooms, when reading later texts, such as the *Taketori Monogatari*, the *Ise Monogatari*, the *Hojiki*, and others, but by examining a text of the early Heian period we can see how history writers negotiated power in pre-nationalistic Japan⁸². This is how I see the work of Anderson, Obeyesekere, Taylor, Duara and others playing a role in literary-historical studies of pre-modern Japan. I return to these issues in the conclusion. First, however it presents a socialized/politicized reading of the NR, an attempt to create an alternative local expression of the *sāsana*.

As we saw, Kyōkai was a resident of the Yakushi-ji, an important imperial monastery. By 795 he had a clerical rank⁸³. However, it is evident from the biography in the NR and the doctrines and characters in the individual miracle tales that Kyōkai was well aware of the incredible gap between the elite monks and the common people. Nakamura believes that

⁸¹ Michele Marra, *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1991): p. 5. See also Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972). This study by Marra is part of a two work study of politics and medieval Japanese literature, the second part was published by the Univ. of Hawaii in 1993 under the title *Representations of Power: the Literary Politics of Medieval Japan*.

⁸² Marra, *Aesthetics*, pp. 6-8. Marra quotes LaFleur’s introduction to *Karma of Worlds* to support her notion that history cannot be separated from literary studies. He writes: “[B]ecause he lives at a time when one set of epistemic assumptions is in a life-and-death struggle with another, the writer cannot do other than defend the one he prefers. He cannot tell a story or sing a song just ‘for its own sake.’” (6) What Marra fails to note is that LaFleur studies texts like the NR in intellectual/religious history, but not in political history.

⁸³ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, p. 5.

because Kyōkai was probably witness to the debates in the imperial temples between supporters of Saichō and Kūkai and other monks who supported the court control of the *saṅgha*. The author of the NR “chose not to identify himself with the eminent monks at Nara, who attempted to maintain their leadership by revitalizing the traditional doctrinal learning in the face of these two new schools.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, “although Kyōkai belonged to the Yakushi-ji, one of the greatest centers of Buddhist studies, and was honored with clerical rank, he was conscious of a gap between scholarly monks and common devotees with whom he identified himself. He showed great sympathy for lay devotees whose simple, direct faith he admired, and he was determined to ‘guide all sentient beings’ to the western land of bliss in spite of his own limitations.”⁸⁵ There is evidence that Imperial law might have worked to exacerbate the differences between elite and provincial monks forcing monks who broke Imperial law to work in the provinces of provincial administrators. Emperor Kammu issued a series of laws “ordering that a roster of ‘virtuous monks’ be compiled and sent to the central government so that such monks might be commended as models for clergy;” and an edict deploring the failure of the authorities to arrest corrupt monks who choose their own lay patrons or who tour villages claiming to be able to work miracles, thus deluding the ignorant masses. Such monks were to be exiled to a distant province and required to stay in a recognized temple.⁸⁶ Kyōkai’s characters break the laws established by the court with impunity and he records their activities “deluding the ignorant masses” as models of bodhisattva behaviour.

Kyōkai’s doctrinal stance can be inferred from the stories in the NR. Mappō, or the entropic notion of Buddhist history in which Buddhist teachings were gradually being corrupted and misunderstood overtime and Buddhist practice was becoming less rigorous, was entering Japanese Buddhist discourse. He interpreted mappō as being a causal factor for the growing difficulty of humans to realize enlightenment. There are many tales in the NR that relate the “killing, stealing and cheating”

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁶ Stanley Weinstein, “Aristocratic Buddhism,” in *Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 2, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999): pp. 454-458.

of humans⁸⁷. We saw an example of this in the story of the man who stole the painting from the novice nun. Kyōkai saw his role as a Buddhist thinker and teacher to “save” all people from the “decadence” of the age. He states that he compiled the stories so that “by conferring the merits obtained in writing this work on all beings, who are going astray, I pray to be born in the western land of bliss with them all.”⁸⁸ This notion of saving all beings in the process of saving oneself was one of the major characteristics of Mahāyāna thought in general as seen in most popular Buddhist texts in Japan, i.e. the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasutrā* and the *Śrīmālādevisutrā*. Furthermore, Amidist notions of the Pure Land were beginning to come into prominence during the first half of the 9th century⁸⁹. Kyōkai, like Saichō, may have seen fulfillment of the vows of a bodhisattva to save all beings as his *modus operandi* and part of his own goal of re-birth in the western paradise.

For Kyōkai the idea of saving all beings was intimately connected with his own practice. Because of his possible beliefs in mappō, he believed that he must propagate what he saw as the proper teachings of Buddhism among all people. He writes that he

“has not studied the *yin-yang tao* of Huang Ti, nor understood the profound truth of the Tendai Sage, and he [himself] is stricken with disaster without knowing how to evade it, worrying and grieving without looking for the way to do away with disaster.”⁹⁰

Still, he believed that a person need not be educated in advanced Buddhist philosophy to be saved. Kyōkai saw himself as an “ordinary monk,” whose aim it was to “guide people to salvation by transferring the merit gained in the compilation of a collection of Buddhist legends. He intended to show how dharma was “at work” in everyday life⁹¹.

Kyōkai had a particular affinity to lay commoners. This, I suggested, may have been due in part to the growing dissatisfaction with the state’s control of Buddhism, but this must be further clarified. Kyōkai was part

⁸⁷ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 286.

⁸⁹ Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, pp. 14, 276-83.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

of a growing number of monks who saw the common person as ripe for teaching. Gyōgi and Dōshō both wandered throughout the provinces teaching Buddhism to lay commoners and instituting public service projects such as building bridges and ferries⁹². Kyōkai mentions Gyōgi seven times in the NR. In a story about a monk who found a piece of wood that had been struck by lightning and carved magical Buddha images out of it, Gyōgi is mentioned as an incarnation of Manjusri⁹³. In the story about a monk who renounces the world in order to practice good at the sight of the adultery of crows, a yogi compassionately initiated a governor, Shingon, who was depressed at the sinfulness of all creatures, even crows, into the renouncer's path⁹⁴. In others he preaches to common women and men as a bodhisattva, a Buddha in disguise or as a venerable wandering monk, in stories of humans who learn lessons from snakes, crabs and frogs⁹⁵. Gyōgi, a monk who wanders among the people, is the ideal image of man. His life amongst the people is considered the highest practice of Buddhism as seen in a story where he is compared to another monk, named Chikō. Chikō was “innately intelligent, and no one excelled him in knowledge”, but Gyōgi, because he was a preacher for the common person, “was innately intelligent, endowed with inborn wisdom.”⁹⁶ Chikō was a master of doctrine and a famous monk, but he was not a bodhisattva, because he had not, unlike Gyōgi, perfected compassion. The NR only confers the title of bodhisattva on four people: Konsu, Eigo, Saru-Hijiri and Jakusen⁹⁷. These four are all noted for their missionary work among the rural commoners. For example, Eigo, “taught and guided people by the sea” and magically enabled one monk who came into contact with him to have the power to chant the *Lotus Sūtra* forever, because after his death,

⁹² Ibid., p. 24.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 115.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 160.

⁹⁵ See relevant stories in *ibid.*, pp. 170, 172, 177, 178, 201, 202.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 77, 116.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 77; Nakamura notes that except for the nun, Saru-Hijiri, all these ascetics were venerated by the emperor. He suggests that the reason Saru-Hijiri may have not been honored was because he was a hijiri, which was a “charismatic leader of lay Buddhist movements.” See also Ichirō Hori, “On the concept of the *hijiri* (holy man),” *Numen* V, no. 2-3. (1958): 128-160; 199-231.

his tongue stayed alive and continually chanted the scripture on a mountain inside his decayed, empty skull⁹⁸.

These activities “worked against the government’s intention to confine monks to the temple precincts.”⁹⁹ The government from the late 7th century had been trying to control the activities of monks, but only after the Dōkyō incident did these activities become heavily suppressed. The *Sōniryō* was a set of ordinances promulgated sometime after 757 c.e. These were administrative and penal codes that attempted to subsume monks and nuns under the power of the central government (*Genbaryō*) by controlling ordination. Lay people had required a permit from the government to ordain and the government could at any time strip a nun or monk of their robes. Other restrictions prohibited men or women who were already married with children from ordaining. This law particularly effected Kyōkai who ordained at middle-age after having a child and had to spend a number of years as a novice before being granted a permit¹⁰⁰. Other laws, such as requiring high levels of education and the memorization of certain texts before ordination, as well as a ban on fortune-telling, curing rituals and exorcism, limited the common person’s access to the sangha. There were many self-ordained monks who broke these laws. Famous dissenters like Saichō and Kūkai called for a retreat from state control of the sangha and the corruption of imperial monasteries¹⁰¹. Kyōkai as

⁹⁸ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, pp. 221-22. For more information on Gyōgi’s relationship with Chikō see: Yoshiro Kurata Dykstra, trans., *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku hokekyōkenki of Priest Chingen* (Kyoto: Kyoto Univ. Press, 1983): pp. 27-29.

⁹⁹ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰⁰ For detailed information on the various bureaucratic offices and their duties in the Heian period see: G.B. Sansom, “Early Japanese Law and Administration,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 9 (1932): 67-110. The registration of monks and nuns was controlled by the Ministry of Central Affairs (*Nakatsukasa-shō*). It is interesting to note that the Department of Religious Affairs did not control the affairs of Buddhist, but only Shinto shrines. In the second part of Sansom’s study of early Japanese law he takes up the subject of the punishment of monks. For our purposes, a punishment is given to “monks or nuns who, not residing in a monastery or temple, set up [unauthorized] religious establishments and preach to congregations of the people...officials of provinces and districts who being aware of such conduct do not prohibit it shall be punished in accordance with the law.” (128) See G.B. Sansom, “Early Japanese Law and Administration: Part II,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 11 (1934): 117-150.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-23.

seen from his stories was probably part of this growing reaction against the state.

Kyōkai's sympathy for the common person and his polemic against the state can be seen in the two examples above. In the first story of the novice nun we see that the heroine of the story is not a ranking member of the sangha, but a novice nun. Her name is unknown. She is not famous. Still she possesses keen perception and through her actions teaches the other-power of the painted image. Moreover, the story takes place in the *lokiya*, the lay world of the marketplace¹⁰². The market becomes the *dharmaśala* (dharma hall) and the audience is common people going about their daily business. This same emphasis on the ability of lay people to understand the dharma and receive blessings from Buddhist deities is seen in the second example of the parents of the girl with a clenched fist. The story begins by stating that the parents were too poor to donate funds to build a stupa. Moreover, the fact that the parents live outside the capital is evinced by the fact that provincial magistrates and regional governors come and pay homage to their "low-class" daughter. Finally, both stories mention a "devotee's association" which the parents on the one hand and the novice nun on the other create or take part in. Kyōkai himself led one of these "devotee's associations" that propagated Buddhism in the provinces.

This emphasis on the quotidian nature of the characters in Kyōkai's tales also serves as a polemic against the bureaucratic efforts of the court to control nuns and monks ordination, travelling and training. As we saw, Kūkai and Saichō asserted their independence vis-à-vis the state by founding monasteries on Mt. Koya and Mt. Hiei respectively. Saichō throughout his adult life fought the state for the right to control his own

¹⁰² For information regarding developments in provincial law and Imperial control in the Heian period see: Francine Heraïl, *La cour du Japon à l'époque de Heian* (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1995): pp. 16-19. Heraïl writes: "Hiérarchie, définition claire du partage des compétences, notation annuelle des fonctionnaires et avancement au mérite tous les quatre ans, traitements payés par les magasins officiels à dates fixes et selon le grade et le rang de chacun, contrôle strict exercé sur l'ensemble des biens du pays, nécessité d'un ordre écrit pour les moindres actes, tous ces traits donnent au régime institué par les codes sa tournure bureaucratique." (18) For more information of provincial law codes see: G.B. Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration, Part II," pp. 118-127.

ordination platform¹⁰³. He also criticized Nara monks for what he saw as their “Hināyānist” practices and their over-emphasis on *Vinaya* precepts and attracted followers to his mountain center. His consistent battle with Nara monks and his appeals to the state to grant him religious freedom and the power to ordain is seen in his *Shugo kokkai shō* and *Kenkairon*¹⁰⁴. This activity, in addition to his five personal vows focusing on practicing to liberate all beings before himself, reflects changes in Japanese Buddhism at the end of the Nara and beginning of the Heian periods. However, this understanding of this period posits strict dichotomies between urban Nara monks and mountain practitioners like Saichō that may have been more complicated. Kyōkai, a Nara monk himself, may have been sympathetic to Saichō’s arguments, but remained based in Nara. He must have travelled far and wide in Japan, as seen in his detailed knowledge of certain regions and the names of locals in those areas, and it is impossible with our historical information to know how much Kyōkai knew of Saichō. Still, if we look to the NR, I suggest that the connection between the two is evident if we concentrate on it as a polemical text. In the first story cited above, the nameless novice nun resides in a mountain temple, but comes out to preach to the common people. This temple was not one of the “licensed temples” (*jōgaku-ji*) and was therefore illegal under the provisions of Article 5 of the *Sōni-ryō*¹⁰⁵. The mention of a mountain monastery in this story and in numerous others may suggest sympathy with Saichō’s efforts¹⁰⁶. The story also mentions the practice of painting Buddhist images in the mountain retreat that points to esoteric practices that were becoming popular under Kūkai¹⁰⁷. The fact that the painting

¹⁰³ Umehara Takeshi, “Heian Period: Saichō,” in *Buddhist Spirituality II: Later China, Korea, Japan and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: Crossroad, 1999): pp. 168-69.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ See various stories about ascetics and bodhisattvas emerging from the mountains to preach to the common people in the NR. *Ibid.*, pp. 283-86, 140-42, 196-97, 242-43. For studies on the role of the mountain in Japanese religions see: Ichirō Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968): pp. 141-170; and, Allan Grappard, “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a definition of sacred space in Japanese religions” *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982): 195-221.

¹⁰⁷ Shuichi Kato notes that Kyōkai’s NR marked a shift (or one “extreme” in the literature of the period) in the Buddhist literature of the period because it reflected the “tastes

possessed magical properties ties into Kūkai's emphasis that the body, speech and mind had to be used in Buddhist practice, which he learned while studying the practices of Amoghavajra and I-Hsing in China. Painting, calligraphy, physical gestures, chanting dhāraṇī, etc. were seen as forms of praxis that imitated the body, speech and mind of Mahāvairocana¹⁰⁸. Finally, miraculous painting in the story of the novice nun came to be revered by "clergy and laity" in the mountain temple. This locative specificity, as we saw in the locating of relics in Lanna, legitimizes the spatial authenticity of the mountain monastery where the nun resided and thus served as a polemic against the famous urban Buddhist temple complexes and their intimate connection to the saṅgha bureaucracy and court rule restrictions on the activities of monks.

This polemic is also seen in the second story. The explicit moral of the story is that the poor parents' vow was fulfilled because of their faith and the power of the ashes of the Buddha. However, historical context indicates an implicit polemical element contained in its narrative. After the daughter opens her hand to expose the relic "provincial magistrates" and "district governors" came to pay homage to this girl and her possession. They built a pagoda and temple, fulfilling the poor parents' vow. This pagoda/temple was an "uji." Uji were rural temples outside of the *jōgakuji* system that were sponsored and built by Buddhist village groups called "chishiki." Nakamura states that "it was through their [*chishiki*] activities that the common people came into contact with Buddhist teachings."¹⁰⁹ They invited monks to preach at their rural temples, copied scripture and made images. The story also might refer to local magistrates who used

and views" of the common person. See his *A History of Japanese Literature: The First Thousand Years*, trans. David Chibbett (London: Macmillan Press, 1979): p. 106.

¹⁰⁸ In one story entitled "On attaining great fortune immediately owing to devotion to Kannon and praying for a share of benefits," a monk, Miteshiro no Azumabito, is called from his retreat in the mountains to cure the illness of a young girl living in a small village using the power of dhāraṇīs. The monk from the mountains was the only one who could save her. Because of his power he was given the girl's hand in marriage and had a daughter. At the end of the story Kyōkai states "Azumabito was richly blessed in this life because of the mysterious power he gained from his devotional practices and the great virtue of Kannon. How can anyone not believe that?" Ibid.: pp. 146-47. For more information on Kūkai and his esoteric practices see: H. Inagaki, "Kukai's Sokushin-Jobutsu-Gi," *Asia Major* XVII.2 (1972): pp. 190-213.

¹⁰⁹ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, p. 26.

these *uji* to serve the poor and (as a result or for the express purpose) had “an institutional base for solidifying their power.”¹¹⁰ Regardless of the motivations of the provincial magistrates and local governors, Kyōkai implicitly records or composes stories that take place outside the scope of urban saṅgha and court jurisdiction. In fact, in other stories Kyōkai mentions with praise monks who criticize the government’s efforts to punish monks. For example, in “On the appearance of good and evil omens which were later followed by their results,” he provides his view of the history of the Dōkyō incident, attacking the immorality of the ruling families of the past. Then, in a rare autobiographical aside, he discusses his own failings due to the past effects of karma. However, he discovers that the way to improve his karmic standing and gain liberation by offering food to a wandering mendicant that he sees in a dream. This mendicant, Novice Kyōnichi, teaches our author about the value of the life of the mendicant, through his actions of begging among the common people and by giving him a scroll with only two characters on it from the *Shokyō yōshū* (a collection of miracle stories collected in China by Tao-shih in 659). Upon waking, he announces

“this is the dream I had, and I am not sure what it means. I suspect it is none other than a revelation of the Buddha. The novice may be an incarnation of Kannon...[when (in the dream the novice said)] ‘I will visit other places for begging and come back here’ may be paraphrased as ‘Kannon’s boundless compassion will fill the world and save all sentient beings, and Kyōkai’s wish [for liberation] will be granted.’”¹¹¹

This story, which is placed second to last in the collection, provides a user’s guide of sorts to the text as a whole. By inserting his own voice into the collection the author is able to speak directly to the reader. The poor, provincial mendicant novice, who is actually an incarnation of Kannon, shows Kyōkai the path to liberation through compassion. This instruction is done in a dream and through only two characters from a text. This may suggest a revolt against formal teaching in a monastery with officially ordained dharma masters. More importantly, by placing this story near the end of the collection and in the context of criticisms of the imperial

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 281-83.

government, he is rejecting urban, state controlled Buddhist practice and endorsing the life of a wandering monk among the common people. This story, combined with the other example we saw, indicates a political sub-text in the NR¹¹².

Conclusion: History Writing as Transformative

The miracle tales in the JKM and the NR can be read as polemical uses of the genre of history. Although I do not want to discount other readings, I believe that an eye to what function the texts may have had and an eye to what motivated the author to compose them can point to deep structures and massive transformations in historical societies. Moreover, this reading allows us to talk about Buddhist history in a certain time and place without necessary reference to modern notions of nationhood and national consciousness that may not have been active at the time these texts were composed. However, it also does not deny the role Buddhist historians may have had in creating a consciousness of identity that had “family resemblances” to modern concepts of nationhood.

Therefore, I will now turn to an examination of how the two texts are both what I want to call “transformative histories.” Both texts are tools in the author’s efforts to transform the world outside of the text. However, they are in the service two opposing goals. We saw that examining the JKM on the basis of how it attempted to create temporal and spatial authenticity for the kingdom of Lanna has revealed numerous insights into its historical context, implicit and explicit compositional

¹¹² See also *ibid.*, pp. 158-160, 208-9, 137-38. Shuichi Kato notes that throughout the history of pre-modern Japanese literature, “almost all authors and the majority of readers lived (and live) in cities with city life providing the background for a very large number of literary works. It is true that in the regions there were orally transmitted ballads and folk stories, but it was in the cities that these were written down. For example, the *Kojiki*, and, even more so, the *Fudoki*, both of which were compiled in the eighth century, contain a large number of legends and popular ballads from the regions, but there is no doubt that it was because of an order from the central government that these were collected and written down. This is also true of the various *setsuwa* collections which contain tales set in the regions, ranging from the *Nihon Ryōiki* to the *Konjaku monogatari*. . . In Japan in any given period one city tended to be the country’s cultural center.” See Kato, *A History of Japanese Literature*, pp. 9-10.

motivations and the relationship between the saṅgha and monarchy. It first demonstrated that there were political shifts occurring in medieval Southeast Asia between the 14th and 16th centuries that produced structural anxieties. I use the term “structural” to convey an atmosphere of anxiety that was one of the etiological factors for the production of literature. Just as World War I was the impetus for the contrasting artistic and literary movements of Futurism, Dada and later Surrealism, I surmise that the perceived end of regional independence by Lanna was the impetus for producing massive amounts of historical texts, like the JKM, in a short period of time. In turn it worked to create the concept of Lanna as a *sāsana*-region, in Obeyesekere’s use of the term. The JKM was just one of many Pali, Yuan Thai and Lao chronicles written between the 14th and early 20th centuries in Lanna, all of which systematically depicted individual cities in Lanna and Lan Xang which had firm historical connections to the Buddha, Aśoka and Śri Laṅka¹¹³. They also emphasized the righteousness of their region’s kings through their unwavering support of the saṅgha, Buddhist scholarship and the protection of monasteries and their reliquaries. The political significance of these efforts at legitimation only becomes apparent when understanding the larger context of Ayudhyan imperial threats between the 14th and 16th centuries. Not only were these regions established as linked in linear time to the origin of the Buddha *sāsana*, but also defined as unique places. We have seen how the JKM negotiated space vis-à-vis their neighbours. What is important to note is that the establishment of spatial authenticity for Lanna could be seen as an essential weapon of war. Because of the problems of manpower in mainland Southeast Asia in the medieval period, the state that could claim prestige and attract a large population through religious claims could remain independent and economically viable. Furthermore, by highlighting the JKM attempts to establish temporal and spatial authenticity in the context of its on going war with Ayudhya, we can abandon the arbitrary genre labels of *tamnan* and *phongasavadan* and see the political subtext of the JKM and other supposed “religious histories” of Northern Thailand. Just as Herodotus attempted to emphasize a certain quality and nature of

¹¹³ Chiang Mai and other northern *muangs* were still claiming regional independence until the 1920’s. Chiang Mai was officially incorporated into the Siamese Kingdom in 1928.

being “Greek” in his *Histories* to teach his Greek readers about the dangers of *hubris* and the importance of defending their land and traditions, the JKM was written in the context of war and the details of its historical narrative were used to claim a sense of “*sāsana*-ness,” even if Ratanapañña did not possess a conception of Lanna-ness or regionalism/nationalism.

The NR is also transformative. However, it had different goals and used different means. Unlike the JKM, which made explicit and solid temporal links with the trans-local religion of Buddhism by placing Lanna temporal sequence with the Buddha and the great Buddhist kingdoms in India and Śrī Laṅka, the NR made no explicit connections with the trans-local. As we saw, Kyōkai did state in the preface and in the story of his dream of the novice mendicant that the *Shokyō yōshū*, a Chinese text, was an excellent scripture¹¹⁴. Moreover, he occasionally quotes Chinese Buddhist texts, most often the *Hoke-kyō* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasutrā*), in his collection (although often incorrectly)¹¹⁵. However, he does not link his stories to the Chinese ones through characters or events, he claims no direct instruction by Chinese (or Indian) masters, and none of his tales about the origins of relics or images mention the details of their passage from India, Korea or China to Japan. The one relic story we examined in detail can be said to legitimize the local by connecting it to the historical Buddha through his relics, but this is the only place where an actual relic of the Buddha is mentioned and no reference is given to India, the past or the larger world of the *sāsana*. In other stories, like the one about

¹¹⁴ Nakamura, *Nihon Ryōiki*, pp. 276-83.

¹¹⁵ Nakamura sees the Chinese influence on the NR to come mostly from the *afore-mentioned* *Nehan-gyō*, *Hoke-kyō* and the Chinese collection of miracles tales, *Shokyō yōshū*. He also notes that Kyōkai was probably familiar with the *Myōhōki*, a text about the dangers of karmic retribution, which was known in Japan. Besides being familiar with the stories and ideas in these texts, his structure of introducing each story with a date and name is similar to the *Hoke-kyō*. For our purposes it is interesting to note that Nakamura sees the only real difference between the Chinese miracle stories and the NR in the way that Kyōkai does not criticize self-ordained monks “who had not studied Buddhist doctrine and who violated Buddhist precepts and the *Sōni-ryō*.” *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37. W.G. Beasley gives a good history of historical writing in Japan, but he overlooks NR when he writes that the “historical writing...in the early tenth century...was replaced, after a hundred years or so, by the *rekishi-monogatari* (‘historical tales’).” (173) See his “Traditions of Historical writing in China and Japan,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 7 (1959): 169-86.

the novice nun, miraculous Buddhist images and paintings are created by provincial novice nuns and monks. Clearly, Kyōkai saw himself as part of a trans-local religion. He knew of Chinese and Indian texts, as seen in his references to the *Shokyō yōshū*, *Hoke-kyo*, *Nehan-kyo* (*Mahāparinirvaṇasutrā*) and allusions to various stories found in *Jātakas*, *Avadānas* and *Nidānas*, but these references are not used to legitimate his stories¹¹⁶. He rarely mentions place names outside of Japan, except for the famous five mountain Buddhist sacred site of Wu T'ai Shan in China, but his stories could be used as a source for historical cartographers of Japan due to his meticulous and incessant attention to place names¹¹⁷. LaFleur notes that his barrage of historical details, names and places works to give a sense of “authority” to his text. It also sets the NR apart from other collections of miracle tales in Japan, such as the *Kongōbuji konryū shugyō engi* by Ninkai, where esoteric ritual tools or entire mountains fly from China to Japan in order to legitimate the sacredness of certain places in Japan¹¹⁸. Kyōkai made the countryside of Japan the center of his history writing. He was aware of his part in the trans-local, but his text works in the service of creating the local, not only as separate from the larger Buddhist world, but also separate from the clerical, urban world of state Buddhism in Japan. His stories emphasize some of the most elementary values and concepts of Buddhism: the dangers of bad karma, the importance of faith and making vows, the importance of the life of the mendicant preaching to the people, the saving power of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, the Bodhisattva vow to liberate all beings, etc. Therefore, unlike the JKM, he wants to show that what he saw as the values and concepts of Buddhism were localized and understood among the characters that he depicts. His legitimation for the value of the local comes not from physicality or temporality, but from the timeless, non-locative world of ideas.

Kyōkai not only had a different relationship with the trans-local *sāsana* than Ratanapañña and hence employed different narrative means to legitimize the value of his local subject, he also had a completely different goal.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 114.

¹¹⁸ See George Tanabe, “The Founding of Mount Koya and Kukai’s eternal Meditation,” in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George Tanabe (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999): pp. 354-359; and Grappard, “Flying Mountains,” pp. 195-221.

The NR, in the examples we read and in many others, does not seek to create a state, legitimize political rule of a particular area, or serve as a weapon of war in inter-regional conflict. It works to implicitly emphasize the value of the practice of Buddhism outside the jurisdiction of Imperial Buddhism. Imperial Buddhism sponsored Buddhist learning, the copying of scriptures, creation of religious art and controlled the ordination, tenure of training and location of practice of Buddhist nuns and monks. Kyōkai was part of a growing movement of elite monks away from the urban centers of Buddhism in Nara and Kyoto and Imperial Buddhism. His stories focus on rural or mountain temples, novice practitioners, women, esoteric practices, merchant life, children and poverty. They work to shift the scene of Buddhist practice and belief away from the philosophical debates, sectarian battles, official ordination platforms, imperial and “licensed” temples, court life and wealth of cosmopolitan Buddhist practice sanctioned by the state¹¹⁹. These foci, I believe, are evidence of the polemical aspect of these miracle tales, and like the JKM, are a major aspect and significance of the NR that interpreters like Nakamura and LaFleur overlooked.

The NR and the JKM are transformative. They reveal through historical narrative in the form of mythological stories the changes that were occurring in their respective historical contexts. They also can be read as attempting to initiate a transformation by giving a voice to those who were endeavouring to facilitate societal change. This reading moves beyond a Braudelian notion of the influence of the historical contexts on the mind of the writer or even a Hayden White-type reading of an emplotted narrative creating a history that existed coherently only in the mind of the historian. These two examples give a new way of reading history as transformative; of not just reflecting change, but attempting to create change. In the case of the *Nihon Ryōiki*, Kyōkai wanted to transform the way Buddhism was practiced, erase the dichotomies between monk and nun, common and elite and urban and rural and grant religious freedom to wandering monks who saw it as their duty to preach and work among all

¹¹⁹ For more examples of the NR’s depiction of women in salvific roles and those who are blessed with miraculous happenings, see stories on pp.: 215-16, 160-61, 161-63 and 171-72.

people. Ratanapañña used history and miracle stories to create Lanna as a sacred Buddhist space within the politically and militarily volatile world of medieval Southeast Asia. Approaching histories like the NR and the JKM as transformative may assist scholars in studying the past and the writers of the past without reifying modern conceptions of nation and region. Moreover, it does not deny agency to pre-modern Buddhist historians whose writings reflect the intellectual history of group identity analogous to modern ideas of nationhood.

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