

**Special
Seminar**

Seminar on Shan in Chiangmai

Buddhist Ordination and Tourism / Migrant Men in the Sex Industry



3:00-4:00

Speaker: Ploysri Porananond Chiang Mai University

Title: Poy Sang Long as Cultural Tourist Attraction in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Abstract :

This study focuses on practices in Poy Sang Long, and how to promote it as a cultural tourist attraction in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Poy Sang Long is a celebration where traditionally young Shan boys aged between 7 and 10 are ordained as Buddhist novices. The celebration is known as "Sang Long" in Shan, as it's believed to bring great merit to their parents. This year, the Shan community in the city of Chiang Mai celebrated Poy Sang Long at Wat Koo Tao from March 24 to March 26, 2003. Poy Sang Long reflects the Buddhist faith and belief of the Shan people in Chiang Mai. This ritual is modeled on the life of Prince Siddhartha, who renounced worldly pleasures to seek the path of Dharma. After the parents shaved their heads on the first day of the ceremony, Sang Long members receive blessings, becoming exact replicas of Prince Siddhartha. As such, they cannot walk on the ground and must be carried by their parents or relatives for all outdoor activities. Sang Long then takes the role of a young prince and sits in a designated sacred area. During the second and third days, parents, family, and friends lead elaborate processions around the temple's main hall. On the evening of the third day, Sang Long is transferred to novice Buddhists in the temple's main hall as part of the ceremony.

It is found that Poy Sang Long's activities create ritual practices and their symbolic meanings which are valued by the participants. Additionally, participants in Poy Sang Long, who are family members



and friends of Sang Long's family, also take part in the celebration as both audience and actors.

Poy Sang Long has the potential to be a popular tourist attraction in Chiang Mai. It provides an opportunity to learn and understand the ways of life, rituals, and beliefs of the Shan people. By engaging in tourism activities, visitors can gain insights into the lives of the Shan people who reside in the city of Chiang Mai.

About the speaker: Associate Professor Dr. Ploysri Porananond is an affiliated researcher at the School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. Her expertise is in tourism and culture, community-based tourism, and tourism development in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

4:00-5:00

Speaker: Amporn Jirattikorn Chiang Mai University

Title: Masculinity for Sale: Shan Migrant Men Sex Workers in Thailand and the Performance of Manhood

Abstract :

The portion of sex industry in Thailand involving same-gender sex between men has recently seen a shift to a predominantly migrant workforce, particularly in northern Thailand. The majority of male sex workers in Chiang Mai, a metropolitan center in northern Thailand, are Shan migrants from Myanmar. This research explores the lives of Shan men engaged in sex work in Chiang Mai, examining how engaging with queer sexual commodification shapes their gender and sexual identities. Shan men in this research are mostly straight identifying males who are turning "gay for pay". As in many cultures, men who engage in such work are seen as neither "good men" nor "real men", how being a sex worker giving services to men affects their sense of masculinity. Based on 20 in-depth interviews with Shan migrant men sex workers living and working in Chiang Mai city, this research explores, on the one hand, how Shan men sex workers negotiate, redefine, and reconstruct their masculinities, and on the other, how the identities of being a masculine man, sex worker, and non-citizen migrant intersect and shape their experiences and identities.

About the speaker: Amporn Jirattikorn is a Professor at the Department of Social Science and Development at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. She received her Ph.D in Anthropology from the University of Texas, Austin in 2008. Amporn's research interests are in two areas of media flows and mobility of people across national boundaries. One area focuses particularly on the movement of Shan migrants from Myanmar into Thailand. Her publication has centered on the construction of migrant identities through media consumption, ethnic media production in Myanmar, and the formation of Shan migrant identity. The other area involves cross border flows of Thai television series to Asian countries and the audience reception of Thai popular culture. Her recent research involves the (re)construction of masculinity among Shan migrant men who engaged in sex work in Chiang Mai, Thailand.



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