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Textual Contents of Pāli *Samut Khoi*

In Connection with the Buddha's Abhidhamma Teaching in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven

TOSHIYA UNEBE¹
Nagoya University

SAMUT KHOI (สมุดข่อย, ALSO *Samut Thai*, สมุดไทย) is a class of paper book made of *khoi* (*Streblus asper*) paper with concertina folds, which was used in Thailand, formerly known as the Kingdom of Siam.²

This is a revised version of a paper read at Semaine Internationale D'études Palies, International Pali Studies Week Paris, 16–20 June 2014, Sorbonne, École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE). This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24520052.

1 Sadly, Toshiya Unebe passed away after a lengthy struggle with cancer in 2016 as this article was entering the last stages of editing. Mitch Fraas, Nicolas Herman, Justin McDaniel, and Lynn Ransom assisted in the final editing and preparation for publication with heavy hearts. They tried not to change Professor Unebe's prose or content, but simply check references and copy-edit for publication.

2 While this article focused on *samut khoi* manuscripts, the most common manuscripts available in Siam/Central Thailand and Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia more broadly are palm-leaf manuscripts. The history of palm-leaf manuscripts in the region has been well described in a number of sources. For a good bibliography, see Peter Skilling with Santi Pakdeekham, *Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam: A Catalogue Based on the Sap Songkhro*, Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka, vol. 1 (Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation/Lumbini International Research Institute, 2002), and Peter Skilling with Santi Pakdeekham, *Pāli and Vernacular Literature Transmitted in Central and Northern Siam*, Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka, vol. 2 (Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation/Lumbini International Research

This type of paper manuscript is well known for its beautiful illustrations. Many fine pieces of *samut khois* are in the possession of Western libraries and museums, and the late Henry Ginsburg's books on those collections are quite widely recognized.³ On the other hand, the textual contents of the *samut khois* have been left in obscurity. Even the fact that there are *samut khois* containing only Pāli texts is not widely known.

In fact, comprehensive research on *samut khois* and the palm-leaf manuscripts has already been done by a former researcher at *l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* (EFEO), Jacqueline Filliozat, that has resulted in a massive catalogue of data with detailed textual analyses.⁴ In addition, the British Library's Digitized Manuscript website (www.bl.uk/manuscripts) provides high-resolution images of many beautiful *samut khois*. However, it seems that the bibliographical data kept at EFEO and digital images at the British Library are unfortunately yet to be fully utilized for further research. I hope that this article will help to provide an overview of the textual contents of Pāli *samut khois*.

Samut Khoi

Generally speaking, *samut khois* are divided into two groups. Both groups use a script called *Khom* (อักษรขอม), but one group uses a thin character

Institute, 2004). See also Justin Thomas McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008, esp. chapters 4 and 5. See also the introduction to the special issue of *Manuscript Studies* (vol. 2.1) by McDaniel, which gives an overview of the study of palm-leaf and illuminated manuscripts in Thailand with a list of resources.

3 H. Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture: Historic Manuscripts from Western Collections* (London: British Library, 2000). For details of the illumination of one of the finest *samut khois*, MS Pali a.27 (R), which is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, see N. Appleton, S. Shaw, and T. Unebe, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha: An Illustrated Chanting Book from Eighteenth-Century Siam* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013). Incidentally, for the most beautiful *samut khois* in Thailand, B. Siworaphot and P. Sangthab, *Samut Khoi* (Bangkok: Moradok Thai 1999), is a very good showcase.

4 The data should be available at EFEO, as EFEO DATA Filliozat, a database for Pāli documents, studies, and bibliographies of Jacqueline Filliozat. Free CD-ROM available on request at l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient Library, 22 avenue du Président-Wilson 75116, Paris, France, or email kfilliozat@yahoo.com.

set, and the other a thick and calligraphic character set. These days, both are often referred to as “Khmer script” for the sake of convenience, because their characters are very close to the character sets used in Cambodia. Although *Khom* means “ancient Khmer/Cambodia” in the Thai vernacular language, I am not sure if the term “Khmer script” is entirely suitable for the name of the script used in *samut khois* because it is not used in Thailand or Cambodia. In Cambodia today, the thin and oblique character set is called *Āksâr chriêng* (អក្សរជ្រៀង), and the thick character set is called *Āksâr mul* (អក្សរមូល). Thick *Khom* (also spelled *Khâm* in Cambodian studies) in *samut khois* has four slightly different characters (*ka*, *ña*, *ja*, *va*)⁵ than the current Cambodian *Āksâr mul*. Therefore, although the term *Mul* or its variations are occasionally used in the context of Thai manuscript studies, we should note that this custom is not very precise. Thin *Khom* is also used in palm-leaf manuscripts. It is not usually oblique, even if we may occasionally come across oblique characters in *samut khois*.

Thin *Khom*, roughly speaking, is generally used in nineteenth-century *samut khois*, and thick *Khom* in eighteenth-century *samut khois*. In the nineteenth century, the chanting of the tale of Phra Malai in the Thai vernacular language—a story of a monk named Māleyya (in Pāli) who travels to hell to help people, and to Tāvātimsa Heaven to meet the future Buddha Metteya—was very popular at funeral ceremonies, and many Phra Malai *samut khois* with beautiful illustrations were produced.⁶ They were produced intensively until the early twentieth century, when the custom of making

5 T. Kamei, *Scripts and Writing Systems of the World: The Sanseido Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*, extra volume [In Japanese] (Tokyo: Sanseido, 2001), 351, gives a convenient chart for comparison. For a full-fledged study on the scripts used in Cambodia from a historical perspective, see Antelme, “Inventaire provisoire des caractères et divers signes des écritures khmères pré-modernes et modernes employés pour la notation du khmer, du siamois, des dialectes thaïs méridionaux, du sanskrit et du pâli,” *Bulletin en ligne de l'Association d'Echanges et de Formation pour les Etudes Khmères* 12 (2007). Incidentally According to Kamei., *Scripts and Writing Systems*, 351, the Thai linguist Kāñcanā believes that *Khom* used for Buddhist scriptures, which was itself based on ancient Khmer characters, was transmitted from Thailand to Cambodia (not vice versa), and that the name *Khom* also originated in Thailand. The relation between *Khom* and letters used in Cambodia needs to be studied more comprehensively.

6 See B. P. Brereton, *Thai Tellings of Phra Malai: Texts and Rituals Concerning a Popular Buddhist Saint* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1995), for details of the tale of Phra Malai.

these paper manuscripts apparently came to an end in Thailand. In the British Library alone, there are about thirty Phra Malai *samut khois*. Most of the *samut khois* that are found in other famous libraries and museums have the tale of Phra Malai as their main text. In most cases, extracts from the Pāli Tipiṭaka (the three baskets of Buddhist canon), or occasionally just the *Abhidhamma*, precede the tale of Phra Malai.

Before the tale of Phra Malai became popular, *samut khois* contained only Pāli texts written in thick *Khom*. These are believed to have been produced in the eighteenth century, the Ayutthaya period. The number of eighteenth-century *samut khois* is rather small compared with the number of Phra Malai *samut khois*. Their main content, as we will see later, is the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, a large, expanded version of the *Buddhānusmṛti* (also known as *Iti-pi-so* chanting). The Pāli texts in eighteenth-century *samut khois* were also used for chanting. However, since both the illustrations and thick *Khom* characters are excessively decorative, it might almost be suspected that the purpose of eighteenth-century *samut khois* was merit-making (*tham bun*) rather than chanting itself, for the act of sponsoring the production of a sacred book and donating it to a temple must have been considered very special merit-making.

In addition to these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century groups, there are further categories of *samut khois* within them: nineteenth-century *samut khois* with Pāli texts in thin readable *Khom* characters (although the number of existing examples of this category is limited) make up the third group. Further, as classified by Ginsburg, the Buddhist cosmological text (*Traiphum*) and a variety of minor works, such as elephant treatises, cat manuals, and fortune tellings with short Thai vernacular texts, form different groups.⁷ They usually do not contain Pāli texts.

In the next section, we shall look at the details of the textual contents of Pāli *samut khois* in the second and third groups.

7 Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 112–34.

Textual Contents of the Pāli Samut Khois

To my knowledge, the standard thick *Khom samut khois* of the eighteenth century contain extracts (*saṅkhepa*) from the Pāli Tipiṭaka (Vinaya, Sutta, and excerpts from the seven books of the Abhidhamma—often called the Abhidhamma Chet Gambhira), and then the *Mahābuddhagūṇa(-vaṇṇā)* as its main text. The specific texts they are drawn from are noted below. Usually two-thirds of the folds are used for this main text. A few non-canonical chanting texts are usually also included. Among them, *Sabassanaya* (also called *Lokuttarajjhāna*), a kind of meditation manual, is included in most cases. A verse text called *Uṇhissavijaya* also often appears. Beautiful illustrations in the *samut khois* are placed at the beginning and end of the texts, which serve as markers of the changing points of the textual contents.⁸

Here are examples of the textual contents of the thick *Khom samut khois* of the eighteenth century:⁹

1. MS. Pali a. 27 (R), The Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom. 20 pairs of illustrations: The Ten Jātakas and the Buddha's Life, no colophon:
A03 *Vinaya* extract, A06 *Sutta* extract, A11 *Abhidhamma* extract, A19 *Sabassanaya*, A25 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, B10 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B27 *Uṇhissavijaya*, B35 end of the texts
2. Manuscript from Wat Hua Krabu, Bangkok, Thailand. 19 pairs of illustrations: pairs of worshipping figures etc., 1743:

8 See Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life*, xii–xiii, for an example of the mapping of illustrations and texts.

9 Most of them have already been studied. For details of the source texts in the Vinaya and the Sutta, see K. Tanabe and Y. Shimizu, *An Illustrated Folding Book from the Ayuttahaya period preserved at Wat Hua Krabue* (Toshima-ku: Sekai-seiten-kanko-kyokai, 2016), for details of textual contents. Their illuminations, if not all, have been published; see Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life*, 90–93, and Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 65–69, for no. 1; Siworaphot and Sangthab, *Samut Khoi*, 318–55, for no. 2; Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 83–84, for no. 3, and 59–62, for no. 5.



FIGURE 1. Worshipping Brahmā and a deity. Manuscript from Wat Hua Krabu, Bangkok, Thailand. A24. Photograph courtesy of Matsune Nakamura and Yohei Shimizu.

A03 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, A25 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B6 *Vinaya* extract, B11 *Sutta* extract, B16 *Abhidhamma* extract, B30 *Sahassanaya*, B33 end of the texts (figure 1)

3. Thai MS 1341, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland. 26 pairs of illustrations: Vessantara Jātaka, no colophon:

A02 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A15 *Sahassanaya*, A22 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, B9 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B26 *Uṇhissavijaya*, B36 *Dibbamanta*, B37 end of the texts in thick *Khom*, B37 additional Pāli texts in thick *Khom* (*Vinaya* and *Sutta* extracts), B38 end of the texts

4. EFEO 40, L'École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, France. 16 pairs of illustrations: Animals, flowers, and worshipping deities, etc., no colophon:

A02 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, A24 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B05 *Vinaya* and *Sutta* extract, B8 *Abhidhamma* extract, B21 *Sahassanaya*, B25 *Uṇhissavijaya*, B34 two *Bojjhaṅgas* (*Mahākassapatherabojjhaṅga*, *Mahāmoggallānatherabojjhaṅga*), B37 end of the texts

5. NYPL Thai MS.6, New York Public Library, New York, New York, United States. 14 pairs of illustrations: Ten Jātakas, etc., no colophon:

A02 *Vinaya* extract, A04 *Sutta* extract, A5 *Abhidhamma* extract, A32 *Sahassanaya* (*Mahānaya*), B2 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, B24 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B39 end of the texts

From this list, especially numbers 1 and 5, we can understand the typical structure mentioned previously, that is, the extracts from the Pāli Tipiṭaka (often not identified) and the main text *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, with the non-canonical chanting texts, the *Sabassanaya* and/or *Uṇhissavijaya*. Taking thick *Khom samut khois* not listed above also into consideration, we can recognize that most of them have extracts from the Tipiṭaka first. In the third one on the list, however, the Abhidhamma comes first and the Vinaya and Sutta additionally appear next, in thin *Khom* script. Some have extracts from only the Abhidhamma. It seems that the importance of the Abhidhamma gradually exceeded the other two over the course of time.

Next are examples of thin *Khom samut khois* in Pali from the nineteenth century:¹⁰

6. OR. 13703, The British Library, London, United Kingdom. 20 pairs of illustrations: scenes of meditation, teaching, illness, and death, etc., no colophon:

A02 *Vinaya* extract, A05 *Sutta* extract, A07 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A14 *Sabassanaya*, A23 Three *Bojjhaṅgas* (*Mahākassapatherabojjhaṅga*, *Mahāmoggallānatherabojjhaṅga*, and *Mahācundatherabojjhaṅga*), A35 *Girimānandasutta*, B9 *Iti-pi-so* and *Gāthā Buddhagūṇa*, B14 *Uṇhissavijaya*, B28 *Mahāsāra*, etc., B40 end of the texts (figure 2)

7. Manuscript from Wat Lat, Petchaburi, Thailand. 10 pairs of illustrations: Paṭācārā therī, asubha, animals, etc., no colophon:¹¹

A02 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, A? *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2 (end at B1), B2 *Abhidhamma* extract, B9 *Sabassanaya*, B15 end of the texts

8. Thai MS 1343, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland. 40 illustrations: Flowers and a narrative scene in B19, no colophon:

10 Consult EFEO DATA Filliozat, and Tanabe and Shimizu, *An Illustrated Folding Book*, for details of textual contents. With regard to their illuminations, see Siworaphot and Sangthab, *Samut Khoi*, 194–233, for no. 7; Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 87, for no. 8; Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life*, 48, and J. Igunma, *A Guardian of Thai Treasures* (London: British Library, 2010), for no. 10.

11 The latter part of Face A (= the first part of Face B) is missing. Thus, the numbering of folds of Face B is based on the present state of the manuscript, and not the original number. However, none of the texts, unless not in their complete form, are missing.



FIGURE 2. *Uṇhissavijaya*: Supatitṭhita asks for guidance from Sakka in fear of misfortunate lives. London, BL OR. 13703, B18: Photograph courtesy of the British Library.

A02 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A05 *Sahassanaya*, A09 *Mahābuddhagaṇa* part 1, B02 *Mahābuddhagaṇa* part 2, B18 end of the texts

Both thin and thick *Khom* are used. The latter script is used for *Mahābuddhagaṇa* and miscellaneous fragmental texts written in A01.

9. EFEO 39, L'École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, France. 14 pairs of illustrations: Phra Malai and the Ten Jātakas, 1814:

A02 Homage (*namo tassa . . .*) and table of contents (*braḥ Vinaya, braḥ Sūta, braḥ Abhidhamma, braḥ Sata-bojjhaṅga*), A03 *Vinaya* extract, A07 *Sutta* extract, A08 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A11 *Sahassanaya*, A16 *Uṇhissavijaya*, A23 three *Bojjhaṅgas* (*Mahākassapatherabojjhaṅga, Mahāmogallānatherabojjhaṅga, and Mahācundatherabojjhaṅga*), A30 *Girimānandasutta*, B05 *Mahāsāra*, B20 *Paritta*, etc., B32 end of the texts, B33 colophon (figure 3)¹²

10. Or. 16552, The British Library, London, United Kingdom. 18 pairs of illustrations: The Ten Jātakas, no colophon:

12 Folds are disordered. They have been detached or glued in the wrong places. Fold numbering is based on pagination in pencil. However, since a few folds (after A09 before B27 etc.) are apparently lost, the numbering here is just makeshift.



FIGURE 3. *Tale of Phra Malai*: Phra Malai and Sakka in the Tāvātimsa Heaven. Paris, L'École française d'Extrême-Orient, EFEO 39, A03.

A01 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A04 *Vinaya* extract, A09 *Sutta* extract, A14 *Abhidhamma* extracts (reprise), A28 *Sahassanaya*, A32 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 1, B18 *Mahābuddhagūṇa* part 2, B38 end of the texts

Numbers 8 and 10 have somehow maintained the basic structure of eighteenth-century *samut khois*. However, the *Vinaya* and *Sutta* are not included in the former, and the latter repeats the set of extracts of seven books of the *Abhidhamma* twice. Among the three baskets, the prominence of the *Abhidhamma* becomes evident.

In addition to the *Sahassanaya* and *Uṇhissavijaya*, which are found in the older *samut khois*, particular Suttas from the Tipiṭaka that seem to have been popular as protective chanting texts can be found. Three *Bojjhaṅgas* (*Mahākassapathera-bojjhaṅga*, *Mahāmoggallānathera-bojjhaṅga*, and *Mahācundathera-bojjhaṅga*) from the Saṃyutta Nikāya V (2.6.4–6) are often found in this group of *samut khois*. In the *Nikāya*, they are called *Gilānasuttas*, namely, the Suttas on sickness, in which the chanting of seven *bojjhaṅgas* (factors of enlightenment) is used as a remedy. The

Girimānandasutta from the Aṅguttara Nikāya (Dasaka Nipāta 6.60) narrates that the monk Girimānanda recovered from sickness when he listened to the teaching of the “ten contemplations” (*dasa saññā*), one of which is the *asubha-saññā* (contemplation on impurity), as a remedy. These texts therefore seem to have served as protective chants against sickness.

Other minor texts such as *Mahāsāra* also seem to be *paritta*-like protective chanting texts (and a list of the twenty-eight past Buddhas), although they are not major *parittas* based on Nikāya texts. The term *paritta* is generally used for this genre of texts; however, in the example at number 9 they are called *bojjhaṅgas* (*sata-bojjhaṅga*: one hundred factors of enlightenment) in the opening part of the manuscript, where it shows a simple table of contents. It is possible that such protective chanting texts used to be called collectively “*bojjhaṅga*” in central Thailand. They would have occasionally been the main contents of thin *Khom samut khois*, as in numbers 6 and 9, instead of the *Mahābuddhagūṇa* in thick *Khom samut khois*.

The Mahābuddhagūṇa, the Sahassanaya, and the Uṇhissavijaya

Here I discuss a little more detail of the main contents of *samut khois*, that is, the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, the *Sahassanaya*, and the *Uṇhissavijaya*.¹³

THE MAHĀBUDDHAGUṆA

The *Mahābuddhagūṇa* is a kind of commentarial text that explains the nine virtues (*buddhagūṇa*) of the Buddha, or rather, nine epithets of the

13 These titles are spelled differently in various manuscripts. Here, I use the stem form *Mahābuddhagūṇa* only for the sake of convenience, although the plural form *-gūṇā* might be more apt. Actual spellings are *-gūṇaṃ*, *-gūṇā*, *-gūṇa*, etc. A vernacular form, *-gūṇa*, occurs most often in title descriptions. Similarly, *Sahassaneyya*, *Uṇhissavijeyya*, and other spelling variations are found. For examples of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, see also Skilling and Pakdeekham, *Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam*, sections 2.8 and 2.163, and Skilling and Pakdeekham, *Pāli and Vernacular Literature Transmitted in Central and Northern Siam*, sections 2.179 and 7.159.

Buddha.¹⁴ The main text is the well-known *Iti-pi-so* formula that is found in various portions of the Tipiṭaka. Since the *Iti-pi-so* is nothing other than a very short list of the sublime qualities of the Buddha, the chanting of *buddhagūṇa* is also called *Buddhānussati* (recollection of the Buddha). It reads as follows:

*Iti pi so Bhagavā Arahaṃ Sammāsambuddho, Vijjācaraṇasampanno
Sugato Lokavidū, Anuttaro Purisadammasārathī, Satthā devama-
nussānaṃ Buddho Bhagavā.*

[Thus the Blessed One is a Worthy One, a Perfectly Awakened One, Consummate in knowledge & conduct, One who has gone the good way, Knower of the worlds, Unexcelled one, Trainer of those who can be taught, Teacher of human & divine beings; Awakened; Blessed.]

The *Mahābuddhagūṇa* rephrases each epithet from Arahaṃ to Bhagavā with a great number of various short descriptions.

For example, Sammāsambuddha (a Perfectly Awakened One) is paraphrased more than a hundred ways—for example, “[he is] perfectly awakened to all the Dhammas” (*sabbadhamme sammāsambuddho*). The longest section, the explanation of the Lokavidu (Knower of the Worlds), contains more than two hundred and fifty explanations of Lokavidu, such as “One who knows the material world is Lokavidu” (*saṃkhāralokaṃ jānātīti lokavidū*). As a result, the *Mahābuddhagūṇa* presents a collection of views on that to which one should be perfectly awakened, a list of various cosmological views, and so on, like the Abhidhamma treatises do.

As discussed in the previous section, the text is divided into two parts. The former is titled *Mahābuddhagūṇa* and the latter *Mahābuddhagūṇa-vanṇanā*. However, they are not a main text and its commentary, although the titles give such an impression. They are in fact a series of texts. In the middle of the longest section, the explanation of the Lokavidu mentioned above, the text rather suddenly stops with a concluding remark. It then

14 See Tanabe and Shimizu, *An Illustrated Folding Book*, for detail.

starts again with an opening verse¹⁵ and the new title, *Mahābuddhagūṇa-vaṇṇanā*. Further research is needed to understand this peculiar custom.

THE SAHASSANAYA

The next text, *Sahassanaya*, which describes “a thousand methods” or a thousand states of mind associated with meditation, seems still to be current in Thailand.¹⁶ Modern chanting books often include it under the title *Lokuttarajjhāna* (supra-mundane state of mind). It used to be, and still is, occasionally chanted at funerals following extracts from the Abhidhamma (*saṅkhepa*). The text itself is based on sections¹⁷ of the *Dhammasaṅgani*, the first book of the Abhidhamma. Indeed, modern chanting books that are common in Thailand draw much of the content from these manuscripts, and so they are important to study to understand the origins of modern liturgical practice.¹⁸

The text of *Sahassanaya* starts as follows. We can observe that it presents combinations of several sets of classifying factors.

15 *Ajjāyasādihi anekabhedam yo sattalokam ati dubbibhāgam/ sammā vibhāgena avedi dhiro, tam lokanātham sirasā namāmi// Mahābuddhagūṇa-vaṇṇanā* (text 77a: A fold24b). The verses read: A fold24b–B fold6b.

16 See The Samatha Trust, *Samatha Chanting Book* (Powys: Samatha Trust, 2008), 40–41.

17 *Dhammasaṅgani* §277–361 (E. Müller, *The Dhammasaṅgani* [London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Henry Frowde, 1885], 61–74). See Rhys Davids, *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics: Being a Translation, Now Made for the First Time* (London: Pali Text Society, 1974), 82–95, for a translation. Credit is owed to P. Skilling, “Pieces in the Puzzle: Sanskrit Literature in Pre-modern Siam,” *Buddhism and Buddhist Literature of South-East Asia: Selected Papers by Peter Skilling* (Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, 2009), §5, and “Matériaux pour servir à l’étude du *Sahassaneyya*,” EFEO DATA Filliozat, for the reference. The latter includes transliteration of many *samut khois*. The commentary I will refer to below is from §358–361.

18 For a study of modern chanting books in Thailand, see Kenneth E. Wells, *Thai Buddhism: Its Rites and Activities* (New York: AMS Press, 1960), as well as Justin Thomas McDaniel, “Liturgies and Cacophonies in Thai Buddhism,” *Aséanie* 18 (2007): 119–50. The latter provides a bibliography of the major modern Thai language chanting books.

Katame dhammā kusalā? Yasmiṃ samaye lokuttaraṃ jhānaṃ bhāveti niyyānikaṃ apacayagāmiṃ diṭṭhi-gatānaṃ pahānāya paṭhamāya bhūmiyāpattiyaṃ vivicc' eva kāmehi paṭhamam jhānam upasaṃpajja viharati dukkhā-paṭipadam dandhābhiññam, tasmim samaye phasso hoti, avikkhepo hoti. Ime dhammā kusalā.

[Which are the states that are good? When he cultivates the Supra mundane (*lokuttara*) *jhāna*, whereby there is a leading out (*niyyānika*) and undoing of rebirth (*apacayagāmin*), and when he enters into the (X) the first *jhāna* that is in (Y) slow and unpleasant mode of progress (*paṭipadā*) putting away wrong views, attaining to the First Stage, and being aloof from sensuous appetites, he has a contact (to salvation) and calmness. These are the states that are good.]

Similar passages with several variations are repeated many times in the *Sabassanaya*. Underlined are variables X and Y, which work as classifying factors. First, there are two sets of *jhāna* as variable X, (1) *catukkanayajhāna* and (2) *pañcakanayajhāna* (four- to five-step *Jhāna*). Then, in variable Y, the combination of (1) *dukkhāpaṭipadā* and (2) *sukkhāpaṭipadā* (unpleasant/pleasant) and (1) *dandhābhiññā* and (2) *khippābhiññā* (slow/quick) are put in order, to classify *paṭipadā* (mode of progress). Further, for this pure (*suddhika*) *paṭipadā*, again two classifying factors, namely, *suññata* (emptiness) and *appaṇihita* (aimless), are later added; the combinations will therefore be (1) *suddhika paṭipadā*, (2) *suddhika-suññata*, (3) *suññata-paṭipadā*, (4) *suddhika-appaṇihita*, and (5) *appaṇihita-paṭipadā*. As a result, the *nayas* are multiplied by five at this point. Lastly, in the final section (not apparent from the above citation), another set of classifying factors is introduced: (1) influenced by no *adhipati* (predominant factor), (2) *chandādhigateyya* (influenced by desire), (3) *viriyādhigateyya* (influenced by effort), (4) *cittādhigateyya* (influenced by mind), and (5) *vimaṃsādhigateyya* (influenced by investigation). At this last point, the *nayas* are multiplied by five. Now the number will be $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 5 \times 5 = 200$. This number apparently falls short of the one thousand it is meant to describe. Since the actual length of various *Sabassanaya* texts in *samut khois* as well as in modern

chanting manuals varies, they do not seem to enumerate the thousand methods in any case.¹⁹

THE *UṆHISSAVIJAYA*

In this context, we can also understand the next text, *Uṇhissavijaya*. The *Uṇhissavijaya* is an extracanonical text that is believed to have been preached to a *devaputta* (son of god) named Supatitthita in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven to help him to prolong his life and avoid bad rebirths. Like the *Sabassanaya*, it used to be chanted at ceremonies to celebrate one's long life and wish him an even longer life. A modern chanting manual (*Mon bidhi*) for monks contains a shorter version of the *Uṇhissavijaya*. The text consists of five out of (about) seventy-seven verses found in the *samut khois*. According to Phra Suthithammanuwat (Ven. Thiab Malai) at Wat Pho temple, the *Uṇhissavijaya* is no longer chanted in authentic temples in big city areas, like Bangkok. However, it seems still to be popular in the provinces. He said that when he was a child, his mother told him to learn it by heart in order to prevent bad fortunes, such as traffic accidents.²⁰

Uṇhissa (*uṇhīsa*) or *uṣṇīṣa* in Sanskrit is the protuberance at the top of the head of the Buddha. The *dhāraṇī* named *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* has been one of the prevailing protective chants in northern Buddhist countries like China and Japan. *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* as a female deity, symbolizing the wisdom of the Buddha, is worshipped in modern times in northern Mahāyāna countries like Nepal and Tibet. Based on Japanese manuscripts and inscriptions, the Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* text was first edited and published by Max Müller and Nanjio Bunyiu at Oxford University in 1884.

19 This variation of 10×5 is the same as that found in present *Sabassanaya* texts. The first item 20, according to both commentaries, is twenty *abhinivesas* (entering into subjects of cultivation) and results in the method $20 \times 10 \times 5 = 1,000$, although this *abhinivesa* is not explicitly mentioned in the *Sabassanaya* texts, with the exception of *jhāna*.

20 For examples of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the *Uṇhissavijaya*, see Skilling and Pakdeekham, *Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam*, 50 (no. 2.25), and Skilling and Pakdeekham, *Pāli and Vernacular Literature Transmitted in Central and Northern Siam*, 120 (no. 7.26).

In that edition, the editors have remarked that the *dhāraṇī* has two kinds of introductions (*nidāna*) or narratives relating the circumstances that led the Buddha to teach the *dhāraṇī*.²¹ Taking into account the results of recent studies, too, we can roughly say that older Chinese translations from the seventh to eighth centuries, an older Tibetan translation from the ninth century, and the only existing Sanskrit manuscript from Gilgit-Bamiyan from the seventh century feature a *devaputra*, Supraṭiṣṭhita, Śakra (Indra) who is the king of the gods, and the Buddha Śākyamuni.²² Upon Indra's request, the Buddha teaches a *dhāraṇī* called *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*. On the other hand, a Chinese translation from the eleventh century, later Tibetan translations, and all Sanskrit manuscripts so far found in Nepal narrate that the Buddha Amitāyus in the Sukhāvatī teaches the *dhāraṇī* to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. On the Indian continent, it seems that the change to the preacher of the *dhāraṇī* occurred in the tenth to the eleventh centuries. The story of Supraṭiṣṭhita was apparently lost in northern Buddhist countries on the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, the *samut khois* in Thailand in the eighteenth century narrate the story, sharing the core with the former. Although they do not contain *dhāraṇī*, and never tell what the *Uṇhissavijayā* really is, they tell the story of the Buddha teaching *Uṇhissavijayā* upon the request of Sakka (Inda) for a *devaputta*, Supraṭiṣṭhita.

One day, Supraṭiṣṭhita, who is enjoying his life in Tāvātimsa Heaven, hears a voice saying that he will die and go to Avīci Hell, and then will be reborn seven times into misfortunate lives, such as that of a pig. When he asks for guidance from the king of heaven, Sakka, he tells Supraṭiṣṭhita that it is not he but the Buddha, who is now in heaven to teach Abhidhamma to his mother and other deities, who is his compassionate protector (*nātha*). They then go to see the Buddha, and he teaches the *Uṇhissavijaya* to them.

While the Sanskrit text of the introduction to the *dhāraṇī* is written in prose, the Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* is written in verse. As stated earlier, five out of

21 F. M. Müller and B. Nanjio, *The Ancient Palm-Leaves: Containing the Pragñā-Pāramitā-Hridaya-Sūtra and the Uṣṇīṣa-Vigaya-Dhāraṇī* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), 33–35.

22 T. Unebe, "Sarvagatipariśodhana-Uṣṇīṣavijaya nāma Dhāraṇī, Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and Chinese Translations, Along with Japanese Translation," *Journal of the Faculty of Letters, Nagoya University* 61 (2015): 97–146.

seventy-seven verses (below) were used as protective chants like the Sanskrit *dhāraṇī*, and they are recognized as the *Uṇhissavijaya* in modern chanting manuals.

There is the unsurpassed dhamma in this world, *Uṇhissavijaya*. For the benefit of all beings, god, you receive this! (1)

One can avoid tyrannical punishments and fire by in-humans. Why can't one [avoid] tigers, serpents, poisons, goblins, and accidental death? (2)

Except for death in proper time, one can be free from all kinds of death. With the supernatural power of it, may you be a happy god always! (3)

Keep the pure *Sīla*, practice the good Dhamma. With the supernatural power of it, may you be a happy god always! (4)

As either of written, contemplated, worshipped, remembered, or spoken out text, when one listens to it as the respectable teaching for others, his life will be prolonged. (5)

How did this come to be one of the main texts of *samut khois* in Thailand? What is the relation between northern Buddhist versions and this one? The difficulty of answering such questions has been previously expressed by Peter Skilling. As he clarified, "It is hard to imagine a late date, given that the Buddhism of India had already waned by the mid-Ayutthaya period."²³ In the case of *Uṇhissavijaya*, it is even more impossible to import the story in the eighteenth century from India, because, as we have seen, the common story of the *devaputra* Supraṭiṣṭhita seemed to be lost, most likely in the tenth to eleventh centuries.

Then was it based on, say, a Chinese or Japanese source that has been transmitted until this day? This possibility is also unlikely. The Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* refers to five withering marks of Supaṭiṭṭhita and the importance of worshipping the triple gem (*Ratanattaya*: Buddha, Dhamma, and

23 Skilling, "Pieces in the Puzzle," 39.

Saṅgha). These are not featured in the various versions of the *nidāna* of the Sanskrit/Chinese/Tibetan *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*. However, an episode in the *Divyāvadāna*, the fourteenth chapter, “*Sūkarikā-avadāna*,”²⁴ refers to these two elements: It narrates the story of a *devaputra* (son of god), who, like Supatitṭhita, is destined to die after seven days and be reborn into the womb of a female pig (*sūkarikā*). In this story, Śakra tells the *devaputta* just to worship the triple gem (*Ratnatraya*). The narrative setting of this episode is apparently common to both the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* and *Uṇhissavijaya*, but the reference to the two elements, the five withering marks, and the worship of the triple gem are not common with northern versions of *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, but the Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* only. It shows that the Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* did not simply originate from the Sanskrit *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* (or Chinese translations of it) but from an even bigger corpus of Indian narratives.

Conclusion

In this article, we have investigated the textual contents of the illustrated *samut khois* in Thailand. The chief text of eighteenth-century *samut khois*, the *Mahābuddhagaṇa*, shows what great importance Thai Buddhists attached to the *Buddha-anussati*, the recollection of the Buddha. The main text, the so-called *Iti-pi-so*, is here expanded with an Abhidhamma-like knowledge base, until it becomes like another Abhidhamma treatise.

The other major texts, that is, the *Abhidhamma-saṅkhepa*, *Sabassanaya*, and *Uṇhissavijaya*, share one common element: they are related to Tāvatiṃsa Heaven. The Abhidhamma is believed to be preached in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven to the Buddha’s mother Mahāmāyā and other deities. The *Sabassanaya* or *Lokuttara-jhāna* is based on the Abhidhamma, and for this reason, it is considered to be a teaching for a deceased person, like the Buddha’s

24 The text is in P. L. Vaidya, *Divyāvadāna*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 20 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1959), 120–21.

mother. The *Uṇhissavijaya* is also believed to be preached in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven.

The importance of the Tāvatiṃsa teaching for Thai Buddhists is quite evident, as I have shown elsewhere.²⁵ It is likely that the teaching in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven provided the basic concept for plans of the *Uposatha* hall as a whole. The *Paṭhamasambodhi*, a biography of the Buddha that is popular in both Pāli and the vernacular in Thailand and Southeast Asian countries, devotes one whole chapter to the Tāvatiṃsa teaching. It also serves as the climax of the events of the Buddha's life as depicted in the Bodleian Library MS Pali a.27.²⁶ Usually, the illustrations in eighteenth-century *samut khois* are not related to the text written in the same fold. Among forty illustrations in the Bodleian *samut kloi*, only in this fold (B27) does the visual content correspond to the textual content. In this fold, the text of the *Uṇhissavijaya* narrates the Tāvatiṃsa teaching of the Buddha, and in the left column the illustrations depict the scene.

Even the main text of nineteenth-century *samut khois*, the tale of Phra Malai, shares this feature, because it narrates the monk Māleyya's meeting with the future Buddha Metteya in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven.

I hope it has now been clarified why the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, the *Sahasānaya*, and the *Uṇhissavijaya* were used for funeral chanting or at long-life ceremonies. They are all somehow related to the Buddha's Abhidhamma teaching in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven. The former two derived from Abhidhamma, and the last one shares the narrative setting. As they are believed to be originally told for Mahāmāyā or Supatitṭhita, these texts are chanted for those who have passed away or who wish for a long life and no misfortunate rebirths.

25 T. Unebe, "Mahāmāyā in Thai Mural Paintings: With Special Reference to the Scene of the Teaching," in *Tāvatiṃsa Heaven and Its Literary Sources*, Proceedings of the 2013 Chulalongkorn Asian Heritage Forum: The Emergence and Heritage of Asian Women Intellectuals, 2013, 171–205.

26 See Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life*, 57–58, 90–91.

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