1-8-2019

Textual Contents of Pāli Samut Khoi-s: In Connection with the Buddha’s Abhidhamma Teaching in Tāvattisā Heaven

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Textual Contents of Pāli Samut Khoi-s: In Connection with the Buddha's Abhidhamma Teaching in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven

Abstract
This article provides an overview of the collections of Thai manuscripts in Japan, especially the Royal Manuscripts presented to the Kakuozan Nittaiji temple and other palm-leaf collections kept at Japanese universities and libraries. It also briefly discusses collections of samut khoi (illustrated folding paper manuscripts) of the Phra Malai dating from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century preserved in museums and libraries in Japan.

Keywords
Japan, Siam, Manuscript, Nagoya, Nittaiji, Samut Khoi

This article is available in Manuscript Studies: https://repository.upenn.edu/mss_sims/vol2/iss2/6
MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2
(Fall 2017)

ISSN 2381-5329

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Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, 3905 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Printed in the U.S.A. on acid-free paper.

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Print and online subscriptions: Individuals: $40; Institutions: $90; Full-time Students: $30
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Textual Contents of Pāli Samut Khois

In Connection with the Buddha’s Abhidhamma Teaching in Tāvatīṃsa Heaven

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Nagoya University

S
amut khoi (สมุดข่อย, also Samut Thai, สมุด ไทย) is a class of paper book made of kboi (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 Paliés, 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 Songkbro, 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 Institute, 2003).
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. 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’École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Jacqueline Filliozat, that has resulted in a massive catalogue of data with detailed textual analyses. 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

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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 Âksâr chriĕng (អកសរជិ្ញ), and the thick character set is called Âksâr mul (អកសរមូល). Thick Khom (also spelled Khâm in Cambodian studies) in samut khois has four slightly different characters (ka, ňa, ja, va) than the current Cambodian Âksâr 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 Mâleyya (in Pâli) who travels to hell to help people, and to Tâvatimsa Heaven to meet the future Buddha Metteya—was very popular at funeral ceremonies, and many Phra Malai samut khois with beautiful illustrations were produced. They were produced intensively until the early twentieth century, when the custom of making

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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 sinois, des dialectes thaïs méridionaux, du sanskrit et du pâli,” Bulletin en ligne de l’Association d’Échanges et de Formation pour les Etudes Khmères 12 (2007). Incidentally According to Kamei., Scripts and Writing Systems, 351, the Thai linguist Kâncanâ 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.

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 Mahābuddhagāṇa, a large, expanded version of the Buddhanusmṛti (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.

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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(-vāṇā) 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 Ayuttabaya 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 Kboi, 318–55, for no. 2; Ginsburg, Thai Art and Culture, 83–84, for no. 3, and 59–62, for no. 5.
A03 Mahābuddhaguna part 1, A25 Mahābuddhaguna part 2, B6 Vinaya extract, B11 Sutta extract, B16 Abhidhamma extract, B30 Sabassanaya, 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 Sabassanaya, A22 Mahābuddhaguna part 1, B9 Mahābuddhaguna part 2, B26 Uñhissavijaya, B36 Dibbamanta, B37 end of the texts in thick Khom, B38 additional Pāli texts in thick Khom (Vinaya and Sutta extracts), B39 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 Mahābuddhaguna part 1, A24 Mahābuddhaguna part 2, B05 Vinaya and Sutta extract, B8 Abhidhamma extract, B21 Sabassanaya, B25 Uñhissavijaya, B34 two Bojjhangas (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 Sabassanaya (Mahānaya), B2 Mahābuddhaguna part 1, B24 Mahābuddhaguna 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 Mahābuddhagāṇa, 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 Buddhagāṇa, 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 Mahābuddhagāṇa part 1, A? Mahābuddhagāṇa 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.
A02 *Abhidhamma* extracts, A05 Sahassanaya, A09 *Mahābuddhaguna* part 1, B02 *Mahābuddhaguna* part 2, B18 end of the texts
Both thin and thick *Khom* are used. The latter script is used for *Mahābuddhaguna* and miscellaneous fragmental texts written in A01.

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

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

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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.
A01 Abhidhamma extracts, A04 Vinaya extract, A09 Sutta extract, A14 Abhidhamma extracts (reprise), A28 Sahasanaya, A32 Mahābuddhaguna part 1, B18 Mahābuddhaguna 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 Sahasanaya and Unbissavijaya, 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 Bojjhanas (Mahākassapathera-bojjhana, Mahāmoggallānathera-bojjhana, and Mahācundathera-bojjhana) from the Samyutta 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 bojjhanas (factors of enlightenment) is used as a remedy. The
Girimānandasutta from the Āṅguttara 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 asubba-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 bojjhaṅga (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 Mahābuddhaguna in thick Khom samut khois.

The Mahābuddhaguna, the Sahassanaya, and the Uṇhissavijaya

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

The Mahābuddhaguna

The Mahābuddhaguna is a kind of commentarial text that explains the nine virtues (buddhaguna) of the Buddha, or rather, nine epithets of the

13 These titles are spelled differently in various manuscripts. Here, I use the stem form Mahābuddhaguna only for the sake of convenience, although the plural form -guna might be more apt. Actual spellings are -gunam, -gunā, -gunna, etc. A vernacular form, -guna, occurs most often in title descriptions. Similarly, Sabassaneyya, Uṇhissavijeyya, and other spelling variations are found. For examples of palm-leaf manuscripts containing the Mahābuddhaguna, 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. 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 *buddhaguṇa* is also called *Buddhānussati* (recollection of the Buddha). It reads as follows:

*Iti pi so Bhagavā Arahaṃ Sammāsambuddho, Vijjācaraṇasampanno Sugato Lokavidū, Anuttaro Purisadammasārthī, Satthā devamanussānam Buddho Bhagavā.*

[Thus the Blessed One is a Worthy One, a Perfectly Awakened One, Consummately 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 *Mahābuddhaguṇa* 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” (*samkhāralokam jānātiti lokavidū*). As a result, the *Mahābuddhaguṇa* 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 *Mahābuddhaguṇa* and the latter *Mahābuddhaguṇavaṇṇanā*. 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

starts again with an opening verse\textsuperscript{15} and the new title, Mahābuddhaguna-vanṇanā. Further research is needed to understand this peculiar custom.

\textbf{The Sahassanaya}

The next text, \textit{Sahassanaya}, which describes “a thousand methods” or a thousand states of mind associated with meditation, seems still to be current in Thailand.\textsuperscript{16} Modern chanting books often include it under the title \textit{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 sections\textsuperscript{17} of the \textit{Dhammasaṅgāni}, 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.\textsuperscript{18}

The text of \textit{Sahassanaya} starts as follows. We can observe that it presents combinations of several sets of classifying factors.

\textsuperscript{15} Ajjhāyasādīhi anekabhedam yo sattalokam ati dubbibbāgan/ sammā vibhāgena avedi dibiro, tam lokanāthaṁ sirasā namāmi// Mahābuddhaguna-vanṇanā (text 77a: A fold\textsuperscript{24b}). The verses read: A fold24b–B fold6b.


\textsuperscript{17} Dhammasaṅgāni §277–361 (E. Müller, \textit{The Dhammasaṅgāni} [London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Henry Frowde, 1885], 61–74). See Rhys Davids, \textit{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,” \textit{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 \textit{Sahassaneyya},” EFEO DATA Filliozat, for the reference. The latter includes transliteration of many \textit{samut khois}. The commentary I will refer to below is from §358–361.

Katame dhammā kusalā? Yasmin samaye lokuttaram jhānam bhāveti
niyyānikam apacayāgimī diṭṭhi-gatānaṃ pabhānaye paṭhamāya
bhūmiyāpattiya vivicc’ eva kāmehi paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja
vibarati dukkha-patipadam dandhābhiññam, tasmim samaye phasso
boti, avikkhepo boti. 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 (apacayāgimī), and when he
enters into the (X) the first jhāna that is in (Y) slow and unpleas-
ant mode of progress (patipadā) putting away wrong views, attain-
ing 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
Sahassanaya. 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) dukkha-patipadā and (2) sukhapatipadā (unpleasant/
pleasant) and (1) dandhābhiññā and (2) khippābhiññā (slow/quick) are put
in order, to classify patipadā (mode of progress). Further, for this pure
(suddbika) paṭipadā, again two classifying factors, namely, suññata (empti-
ness) and appanihita (aimless), are later added; the combinations will there-
fore be (1) suddbika paṭipadā, (2) suddbika-suññata, (3) suññata-paṭipadā, (4)
suddbika-appanihita, and (5) appanihita-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) chandādbipateyya
(influenced by desire), (3) viriyādbipateyya (influenced by effort), (4)
cittādbipateyya (influenced by mind), and (5) vimamsādbipateyya (influ-
enced 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 Sahassanaya 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 Ūñhissavijaya**

In this context, we can also understand the next text, *Ūñhissavijaya*. The *Ūñhissavijaya* is an extracanonical text that is believed to have been preached to a *devaputta* (son of god) named Supatitthita in Tāvatiṣṇa 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 bidhī*) for monks contains a shorter version of the *Ūñhissavijaya*. The text consists of five out of (about) seventy-seven verses found in the *samut khoi*. According to Phra Suthithammanuwat (Ven. Thiab Malai) at Wat Pho temple, the *Ūñhissavijaya* 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.\(^{20}\)

*Ūñhissa* (*unbīsa*) or *uṣṇīsa* in Sanskrit is the protuberance at the top of the head of the Buddha. The *dbāraṇī* named *Uṣṇīsavijaya* has been one of the prevailing protective chants in northern Buddhist countries like China and Japan. *Uṣṇīsavijaya* 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 *dbāraṇī* text was first edited and published by Max Müller and Nanjio Bunyiu at Oxford University in 1884.

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\(^{19}\) 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 × 10 × 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 *Ūñhissavijaya*, 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 dbāraṇī has two kinds of introductions (nidāna) or narratives relating the circumstances that led the Buddha to teach the dbāraṇī. 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, Supratīṣṭhita, Śakra (Indra) who is the king of the gods, and the Buddha Śākyamuni. Upon Indra’s request, the Buddha teaches a dbāraṇī called Uṣṇiṣavijayā. 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 dbāraṇī to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. On the Indian continent, it seems that the change to the preacher of the dbāraṇī occurred in the tenth to the eleventh centuries. The story of Supratīṣṭhita 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 dbāraṇī, and never tell what the Uṇbissavijayā really is, they tell the story of the Buddha teaching Uṇbissavijayā upon the request of Sakka (Inda) for a devaputta, Supatīṭhita.

One day, Supatīṭhita, who is enjoying his life in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven, hears a voice saying that he will die and go to Aviśi 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 Supatīṭhita 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 Uṇbissavijaya to them.

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

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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 Sila, 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 Supratiṣṭhita 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 Supatīṭhita and the importance of worshipping the triple gem (Ratanattaya: Buddha, Dhamma, and

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 Supatīṭhita, is destined to die after seven days and be reborn into the womb of a female pig (sūkarikā). In this story, Śakra tells the devaputra just to worship the triple gem (Ratnatraya). The narrative setting of this episode is apparently common to both the Uṣṇīṣavijayā dbāraṇī and Uṇbissavijaya, 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 Uṇbissavijaya only. It shows that the Pāli Uṇbissavijaya 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 Mahābuddhagūṇa, 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-saṅkheta, Sabassanaya, and Uṇbissavijaya, 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-jbāna 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 *Uñhissavijaya* is also believed to be preached in Tāvatimsa Heaven.

The importance of the Tāvatimsa teaching for Thai Buddhists is quite evident, as I have shown elsewhere. It is likely that the teaching in Tāvatimsa Heaven provided the basic concept for plans of the *Uposatha* hall as a whole. The *Pathamasambodhi*, 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 Tāvatimsa teaching. It also serves as the climax of the events of the Buddha’s life as depicted in the Bodleian Library MS Pali a.26 Usually, the illustrations in eighteenth-century *samut khoi* are not related to the text written in the same fold. Among forty illustrations in the Bodleian *samut khoi*, only in this fold (B27) does the visual content correspond to the textual content. In this fold, the text of the *Uñhissavijaya* narrates the Tāvatimsa teaching of the Buddha, and in the left column the illustrations depict the scene.

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

I hope it has now been clarified why the *Mahābuddhaguṇa*, the *Sabas-sanaya*, and the *Uñhissavijaya* were used for funeral chanting or at long-life ceremonies. They are all somehow related to the Buddha’s Abhidhamma teaching in Tāvatimsa 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 Supatīṭṭhita, these texts are chanted for those who have passed away or who wish for a long life and no misfortunate rebirths.

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