1

Locals and Cosmopolitans in Southern Thailand

Chaiyan Rajchagool (1994) notes that the view that Bangkok occupies the solar position, holding an entire system of regional satellites together, reflects the fact that the working of an ideology has continues to dominate Thai studies. The Thai nation-state is relatively recent. Siam became a nation-state only in the early 1900s, when Bangkok suppressed the autonomy of the outlying regions in the north, the northeast (Isan) and the south. The articulation of state power at the local level required the creation of a state apparatus and the appointment of commoners to state personnel. In social terms, the growth in the numbers of state personnel meant the emergence of a new category in the social structure. This new category comprised what was referred to literally as royal servants (*kharajchakan*). In practice, these people were the building blocks of the new state. They formed a special social group, distinguished by their skills and state functions. The appointment of commoners to office and function produced considerable tension with the old *Sakdina* system, the essential feature of which was the rigorous partition of classes by birth. The new service rank order opened up the possibility for the *phrai*, the commoners, to move up the social ladder. In the face of Western colonialism, the state apparatus was organising the rural population in the outlying regions more tightly. The new administrative units were state authorities in the making. The structure and expansion of the bureaucracy, which was set out during this period continues in force to the present day.

Before the nation-state, an entirely different concept of statehood prevailed in Siam and in Malaysia. The traditional Southeast Asian state, or *negeri*, was a different kind of entity. Its borders were shifting and permeable. As Anderson (1983: 41) has written:

> "The territorial extension of the state is always in flux; it varies according to the amount of power concentrated at the centre ...

> the kingdoms were regarded not as having fixed and charted limits, but rather flexible, fluctuating perimeters."

The Thailand-Malaysian border has sliced well-established kinship and ethnic ties across the border on the Malaysian peninsula. The local perception of the border differs substantially from central views (Carsten 1998, Horstmann 2002b). With the nation-state firmly in place, networks across the border persist and some were revitalized in the 1990s. In this chapter, the transformation of the region from the edge of commerce and religious education to a modern borderland at the fringe of the Thai and Malaysian nation-states will be investigated. The current movements in the borderland are best understood in this historical frame.

At the Religious Crossroads

The changing plural ethnic system in Southern Thailand is on the religious crossroads between the Thai and Malay cultural worlds. The golden peninsula has drawn a multiplicity of ethnic groups to its shores during the course of the past two millennia (Ackerman/Lee 1988).[1] The population movements along the coasts and through the forests of the golden peninsula produced a religious tradition remarkable in its complex diversity. Seafaring Indonesians, Indians, Arabs, Chinese and European migrants, merchants and missionaries in search of trade and salvation left their traces on the plural ethnic system in this part of the world. The strands comprising the region's rich religious traditions included animism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and various forms of Chinese folk religion. Buddhism and Hinduism provided ideologies and symbols that enhanced centralization of political authority during the early period of state formation on the peninsula. Islam was ascendant in the Malay world by the fifteenth century. European colonial domination beginning in the sixteenth century gradually created the basis for a larger scale political entity, tightly integrated into world-markets.

Buddhism in Thailand

As one of my key informants put it, the Buddhist monasteries formed a bloc against the penetration of upper Southern Thailand by Islam. My informant told me the story of a highly charismatic abbot, Luang Por Tuad, who could transform sea water into drinking water. In the south, the Buddhist monasteries play a central role in the reproduction of the

nation-state and Thai ethnicity. Early in the twentieth century, with the restructuring of the administration and the establishment of a territorial state, all monasteries across the kingdom were integrated within a single administrative organization through the Sangha Act in 1902. From this point in time, salvation was only being possible only under state Buddhism. The unification of the many dispersed monasteries brought individual monks under the control of the legitimizing authority of the King. The overwhelming majority of the Thai population is Buddhist. These figures provide the statistical backing of the ideology that Buddhism is the religion inherent in the Thai nation (*satsana phut pen satsana pracham chat*). Buddhist villagers associate Buddhism with all rites of passage that colour their everyday life. The childbirth ritual, for example, includes a recitation of the *Namo* (*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammasambudhassa*). One month after birth, a head-shaving ritual (*kon phom fai*) is held and monks are invited to bless the child. The passage of time is also marked by the holy days (*wan phra*) and the Buddhist festivals. The *Sangha* assumes a special role. It is only through the *Sangha* that the Buddha and the *Dhamma* finds expression in society and it is through the *Sangha* that they are transmitted. New Buddhist movements in the 1980s and 1990s in Bangkok have questioned the monopoly of salvation (Taylor 1990). As pointed out by Fukushima (1999), Santi Asoke's ideology is radically different from the dominant interpretation. The development of ascetic practices and the staging of Buddhism as a social virtue in the public sphere are of great appeal to the educated Bangkokian. The development of a frugal lifestyle fills the spiritual need of the Bangkokian middle class by allowing the privatization of religious practice. Santi Asok and Thammakai provide a forum of social organization for Bangkokians who are looking for alternative strategies of constructing selfhood in a changing Thailand.

For the sophisticated urban middle class, reformist monks provide alternative role models for morals (*sila*), salvation and discipline. The reformist monks in modern Thailand have been introduced by Jackson (1989). While placing considerable emphasis on the individual practice of morality and *vipassana* or insight meditation, the reformists approach practice from the viewpoint of Buddhist doctrine and reject the traditional village forms and the royal form. Phra Bhudhadhasa Bhikku is being called the greatest Buddhist philosopher and in terms of moral authority may have esily surpassed the top of the official Sanhgha. Bhudhadhasa Bhikku was born in 1906 in the Southern Thai province of Surathani where his Chinese father and Thai mother owned a store in the town of Chaiya.

The south is regarded as a centre of Theravada Buddhism and Ligor and Songkla are regarded as centres of Buddhist civilization. Yet,

the south has a special position in Thailand with Buddhist and Muslim villages neighbouring each other and mixed villages, in which Buddhist and Muslim villagers co-exist. However, the interest for the other is giving way to avoidance and hostility in many places of Patani. Co-existence as a way of life has been captured by Nishii's seminal study on a Thai-speaking village in Satun province (Nishii 1999, 2001). Her work focuses on the ritual interaction between Buddhists and Muslims. Taking the relationship between ancestors and descendants (*chuasaai*), Nishii shows how villagers manage difference and how religion coexists in daily life. From her fieldwork on ancestor cults, Nishii argues that the coexistence of religions is embodied in ancestry. The relationship between ancestors and descendants is reciprocal. The social memory provides the basis on which communication is possible. Dancing *Manora* is a way of returning boon that have been requested. *Manora* is a local knowledge, which has been recorded by Muslim as well as Buddhist villagers. Focusing on religious ancestor rituals, Nishii provides rich data on their inter-cultural communication. In *chuasaii*, Muslim and Buddhist villagers communicate codes and symbols in a metalanguage, bridging religious differences.

Islam and the Malay World

As Muslim merchants extended their control over the Indian Ocean trade routes, Hindu and Buddhist contacts with the Indonesian archipelago dwindled. In the fifteenth century, Islamic scholars and missionaries were attracted to Melaka in increasing numbers as the population of foreign Muslim merchant residents in Melaka grew. The Islamization of the Malay Peninsula reflected developments in the Muslim world beyond Southeast Asia. Persianized conceptions of kingship as well as Sufi mystical doctrines preached by Muslim missionaries were compatible with the prevailing Hindu-Buddhist religious and political culture. Muslim reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries proclaimed Shari'a law as the foundation of the state. It was at this time that the Malays intensified their direct contacts with Islamic centers in the Middle East (Roff 1967, 1970).

Through greatly increased participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the Malays became aware of reformist doctrines. After completing the *hajj*, Malay pilgrims remained in Mecca for an extended period of study under well-known Islamic scholars,[2] some of whom were leaders of Sufi mystical orders (*tarekat*). The Nakshabandiya *tarekat*, which was influential among Malay pilgrims, taught an orthodox form of mysticism that strongly emphasized

obedience to Shari'a law. Travelling Muslim scholars of local and foreign origin disseminated the new trends in Islamic thought on both sides of the Straits of Melaka, linking the Malays of Sumatra (Minangkabau) and the peninsula to the sources of Islamic reformism in the Middle East. The modernists, who sought to strengthen and uplift the Muslim community through purifying Islam propagated their ideas through new educational institutions known as *madrasah*, which were modeled after those in Cairo, and through the publications of newspaper (Roff 1967). Patani, in the early nineteenth century, became a centre of Islamic education for those wishing to study under the tutelage of the teachers at the mosque in Mecca. Its reputation was made by scholars of the Patani *ulema* and their classical works on Kitab Jawi, such as those of Shaykh Daud al-Fatani and Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad Zayn al-Fatani (Madmarn 1999): "His (the latter) brief biography tells us that he was born in 1856 in Jaring, Patani, and died in 1906. He was a descendant of a Hadramawt preacher who came to preach Islam in Patani, went to study at Al-Azhar University and returned to Masjid al-Haram, Mecca, devoting his life to teaching". The Islamisation of Patani can be divided into three periods: the 'magical period' from the late thirteenth century to the late eighteenth century, the theological period from the late eighteenth century to the 1920s, and the 'modern period' from the 1920s onwards (Kraus 1984). Shaykh Dawud and Shaykh Ahmad are popular to the degree that their books were published in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Egypt and that some of their works have been copied and reprinted from the nineteenth century down to the present day (Matheson and Hooker 1988). Most of the Kitab Jawi of the leading *ulema* of Patani were first printed in Mecca or Cairo and gradually moved to Singapore, then to Penang. The interest in Jawi books has not yet shown any signs of decreasing in despite the growing interest in modern Islamic media and in spite of the considerable presence of the Thai mass media. The traditional system of teaching is still being offered despite of the processes of change. The date of Patani's conversion to Islam is one of the political stories of the border. As pointed out in Chapter 4 on the structural appropriation of the past, the contestation of the past is part of the cultural construction of locality by the state and religious-political movements. The archeological work of Thai Buddhist scientists on Hindu and Buddhist monasteries, pointing to early Hindu, and Buddhist influences on the golden Malay Peninsula are being carried out on land. This memorial space is appropriated by Malay Muslim scholars who suggest that Patani was at the forefront of Islamic conversion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see chapter 4 on Community Media and the Politics of Nostalgia).

Modernity and Religious Resurgence

In the current cultural competition between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims in Songkla and Patani, politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals who are using cultural forms as a covert form of social action are politicizing religious identities. While previous studies have examined the coexistence and religious boundaries on the village level, this study is concerned with religious revivalism in subjective strategies and hegemonic communities of the educated middle classes and with the political purposes of cultural performances. It is my thesis that many scholars in the local arena who may have like to deal with this perspective are themselves players in the resurgence of cultural and religious forms. It is vital not to give another representation of Southern Thailand, but to try to get into the engagement of citizen with the nation-state. As Herzfeld does, we need to ask:

> "What advantages social actors find in using, reformulating, and recasting official idioms (e.g. religious forms) in the pursuit of often highly unofficial personal goals, and how these actions–often in direct contravention of state authority–actually constitute the state as well as a huge range of national and other identities" (Herzfeld 1997: 2).

We are distancing ourselves from an approach that takes ethnic or religious identities as granted. As Chaiwat (1992) points out very aptly, the literature on Southern Thailand is full of representations that base themselves on the assumption of essentialised ethnic categories. Instead, it is vital to grasp the production and consumption of ethnic and religious identities in the political ideology and organization of the state and in the visions of social and religious movements. Lee/Ackerman (1997) point out that in the Asian revitalization, the increasing power of non-religious professionals and institutions drives the systematic codification of cultural identities and religious world views in the urban middle class.

> "For the literate and technically proficient middle class, participation in religion often includes self-conscious reflection. The cultural traditions entangled with religion, as well as the religious beliefs themselves, become objects of reflection. The embeddedness of religion in culture invites identity-making activity as an extension of religious practice, which today has come to

> rely on sophisticated technical means for its consolidation and propagation" (Lee/Ackerman 1997: 9).

Lee and Ackerman assert that secularization and rationalization enhance and reframe religous action in Asia: cultural identities assert an ongoing connection with valued cultural tradition while engaging with Western modernity. In fashioning new identities, the middle-class participant is a producer who may draw upon popular as well as elite cultural elements and may fit these elements into an ordered intellectualized schema. We will see that the resurgence of religious identities for the middle-class participants in Southern Thailand is also a voyage of cultural rediscovery and nostalgia, in which the Buddhist and Muslim non-religious professionals engage with Western notions of modernity. In the religious field, local change is no longer considered in isolation from events in other parts of the world. The international electronic and print media play an important part in the process of ideological dissimination, just as preachers have increased the effectiveness of missionary work through jet travel and the use of sophisticated audiovisual equipment. Lee and Ackerman speak about a religious economy in the sense of a shifting supply of and demand for salvationary ideologies within a global context of competitive pluralism (Lee/Ackerman 1997: 9). In Songkla, middle-class participants draw on the personalized style of Phra Buddhadasa as well as on the local tradition of Buddhist monasteries in Songkla and Patthalung in their cultural rediscovery. In Patani, the transnational community of Malay-Muslim intellectuals draws on the Islamic party in Malaysia (PAS), on *dakwa* and youth movements of resurgent Islam and on new Islamic movements, such as *Darul Arqam*. In addition, the booming *hajj* business and the growing importance of Islamic education in the Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia) are Islamic networks that transcend far beyond the political boundaries of Thailand. The middle-class participants are gatekeepers who channel the global into the local. They are cosmopolitans with a keen interest in the world. Lee and Ackerman note that rationalization may become a tool in the hands of the Asian middle class for the organization of religious identities among members located strategically. Just as bureaucrats of the nation-state use religion as a central legitimizing resource, members of the educated middle classes in Songkla and Patani organize or consume heightened cultural identities from the religious markets.

The Sacred Landscape: Historiography of South Thailand

In her local history of Wat Phra Kho, Patthalung, Gesick (1985, 1995) balances her local manuscripts against national and academic historiography. She argues that as national geobodies were being mapped into place, local histories were literally being mapped out of existence. The local manuscript, the text, describes how the southern Thai landscape has been perceived and inscribed by the local people. The mind of the people saw the past embedded in a landscape, a landscape of enduring places indelibly marked by ancestral power. In the imaginings of the people of the Patthalung region, 'the area has figured for uncounted centuries as a land copiously imprinted with traces of the life and deeds of Lady White Blood, the mythic ancestress with whom all histories of the region begin' (Gesick 1995: 2-3).[3] Not only have the manuscripts been removed from the local context and shifted to the national center, but the historical sensibilities have also changed. Their preservation was informed by local stories about ancestors and heroes, 'whose actions imbued the local landscape with supernatural power and who could be communicated with through ritual' (Gesick 1995: 79). Gesick (1995) notes that the 1980s and 1990s saw a surge of interest in local history in Southern Thailand. Indeed, adopting Gesick's approach to historical sensibilities, the meaning of local history may also change in the local arena after high education and mass media as well. The past is now part of the cultural rediscovery of the educated lower middle class in Songkla and bustling Hadyai. The sacred landsape of heroes and ancestors has become a terrain for structural nostalgia and authenticity. Local culture provides the backbone of a reconstructed cultural identity in the Thai nation-state. A gilded replica of the *Sathing Phra* map dominates the museum on the handsome new campus of the Institute for Southern Thai Studies.

Family and State: Chinese Immigrants in Southern Siam

The development of Chinese capital in Southern Siam as a comprador to the Siamese state has facilitated the formation of a Chinese bourgeoisie in Southern Siam and the domination of the southern Siamese economy by family dynasties of Chinese descent (Phuwadol 1993). Jennifer Cushman (1991) has shown that the formation of a Sino Thai dynasty in Southern Siam went hand in hand with the interests of the central state in terms of tax revenue and social control. The success of the Khaw family, for example, was built from a set of interlocking and interdependent relationships that included kinship, economic and political ties. For the sake of its egoistic capitalist interests, the Khaw fam-

ily has been a faithful client of the Bangkok state. Reciprocity of interest was fundamental to the revenue farm system on which the Khaw family's fortune was based. The family's reliability in delivering the money was rewarded with posts and appointments in the Thai bureaucracy. From the position of governor, Khaw Soo Chaeng was able to maintain order in an unstable and distant region and to further his family's financial position. The objectives of the Khaw family and those of the state coincided closely. This relationship between the central state and Chinese business families is nurtured in the present and is remembered culturally through the promotion of Chinese foundations and Chinese festivals and through visits of members of the royal family to the memorials and shrines of Chinese families. Cushman (1991) illustrates the choices that have been open to Chinese settlers to secure their place in Thai polity. Service to the state led to the family's rapid upward social mobility, freeing it from its immigrant roots and tying it to the policies and strategies of the Thai rulers. Cushman (1991) casts the family's history in such a way as to illuminate how the Khaws used their political positions to advance the family's commercial interests and how King Chulalongkorn promoted members of a provincial family with powerful economic connections to political positions in order to help consolidate the state's authority in an outlying region. Cushman's (1991) second theme relates to the strength of the family, which it derives from its power bases in the Thai political community and the Chinese commercial world in Penang.

First, Cushman (1991) illustrates how closely the state's political interests and Chinese commercial interests coincided and shows that while the Chinese families certainly took advantage of the patronage of leading political figures in Siam, they also had access to Chinese kinship networks in Penang. As Reynolds notes, 'the account of the lineage as a business is nested in the early formation of the Thai nation-state: The Khaw lineage had a geopolitical position in Southern Siam and Malaya, which the Siamese court in Bangkok relied on, even referred to, and fostered' (Reynolds 1991). Cushman (1991) points out the family's flexible response to any opportunity that could help family members, Western, Thai or Chinese. In particular, she illustrates how the Chinese community could be politically loyal Thais and still follows aspects of Chinese ritual. They could choose Chinese or Sino-Thai spouses serve as administrators in the Thai apparatus, as long as those alignments served their subjective interests. Only the Western capital and colonial administrations challenged the position of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The Chinese entrepreneurs were in close contact with Western colonial administrations and trading houses, adopting Western lifestyles, dress codes and other forms of conspicuous consumption, such as playing

golf and tennis. Cushman's (1991) study also explains crucial patterns of class and strategic group formation in Southern Siam, especially illuminating the nesting of class formation and social mobility in the processes of nation-state building and globalization.

Stories from the Border

Patani is a disputed frontier. Centuries-old struggles between the Thai state and Malay sultanates resulted in the incorporation of the rebellious frontier into the Thai nation-state. Muslim separatism against the encroachment of the Thai state has strengthened relationships with the Islamic heartland in the Middle East and resulted in an unprecedented level of Islamic assistance to an area that was regarded as so marginal. The Malays in Patani regard Kelantan and northern Malaysia as part of their social world. The local perception of the border differs from the symbolism of the center. Islamic networks in Southeast Asia and to the Middle East change the meaning of citizenship. Malay-speaking Muslims have well-established kinship relationships and Islamic networks across the border. Many people from the Patani elite have chosen to live in Malaysia and to become Malaysian citizen. Kelantan has been the centre of political exile for the separatist movement in Patani. Many families are split between Thailand and Malaysian territorries and many of them have dual citizenship for convenience (Horstmann 2002a). Many Patani families send their children to Islamic schools in Kelantan because they worry about the Thai-Buddhist influence on their children. Lately, Patani has rekindled nostalgia for middle class people in Malaysia who join the Patani Malays in their Friday prayers and form circles on Islamic morality to authenticate their cultural experience. Arab and Indian merchants had settled in the commercial centres of Patani by the end of the twelfth century, intermarrying with indigenious people and forming the nucleus of a Muslim community. The Muslim kingdom of Patani grew in population and in prosperity. Patani was described as an important commercial port on the peninsula for Arab and Chinese traders. Ever since the establishment of Muslim dynasties, the kingdom of Patani seems to have experienced alternate periods of independence and Siamese control. At times, when Patani was under Siamese suzerainty, the sultans were obliged to send *Bunga Mas* (flowers of gold) to the Siamese court as a tribute and a sign of loyalty. In confrontation with British colonial expansion on the peninsula, King Chulalongkorn used the colonial technology of mapping, drew the Thai-Malaysian border in 1909, and re-organized the administration. The sultanate of Patani ceased to exist.

Malay-speaking Muslims are being marginalized twice over. They are being discriminated against in Southern Thailand and certain rights and state resources are withdrawn from them. In Malaysia, they are second-class citizens and are regarded suspiciously because of their socialization and accommodation in Thai society. The subsistence of Malay smallholders is threatened by the depletion of natural resources and the introduction of large-scale fisheries. The social mobility of Malay children in the Kampung is hampered by the socialization in the Malay world, the cultural distance to Thai teachers and enduring discrimination against Malay-speaking children.

In the 1990s, Patani witnessed a resurgence of Islam and a more firm integration of the region into national political and economic systems. The emergent Malay middle class is increasingly bilingual, benefits from the educational opportunities in Thailand and is attracted to a more orthodox interpretation of Islam and Islamic texts. In the representation of the self, Islam and Malay ethnicity is increasingly decoupled and Thai is increasingly influential as a medium of religious education. The Malay language is a tool of cultural distinction and is widely used at home, in the Islamic boarding schools and at the markets. Thai is pentrating the social world of the Malays in the form of television, newspaper, education, and popular culture. It is common for young Malays to spend periods of their education in Malaysia and to switch creatively between Thai and Malay worlds.

Entering the Scenery

Long before the Chao Mae Lim Ko Niew celebrations officially start, the sleepy Patani town busily prepares for the event, which attracts hundreds of spectators from Thailand, Malaysia and Taiwan. In the 'Visit Thailand' promotion, the Leng Chu Kiang shrine is publicised as a prime tourist destination. The godliness of Lim Ko Niew becomes a site of pilgrimage for Southeast Asian Chinese. Thai and Sino-Thai pupils present folk dances from Southern China. A special troupe from Chachoengsao Province performs the dragon-dance and occupies the streets, squares and bridges of Patani. According to data from the Tourist Authority of Thailand, Malaysians constitute the largest group of foreign visitors to Thailand: Singaporeans constitute the third-largest group of foreign visitors to Thailand. Overseas tourism is spreading towards the Malaysian border and is crossing the path of Malaysian tourism, whose centre is the bustling town of Hatyai, moving in the opposite direction.

As Chinese from Bangkok, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan feel attracted to the Chinese New Year celebrations in Thailand, the Leng Chu Kiang shrine becomes a theatre for identity negotiations of the Chinese Diaspora. Moreover, the godliness of Lim Ko Niew transforms it into a place of pilgrimage for the Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese at a time when the Chinese have to severely compromise their identity in Malaysia. The extreme popularity of the Chinese identity festivals in Thailand can be seen as going hand-in-hand with the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, the new economic policy and the shrinking public spaces of the Malaysian Chinese. Indeed, tourism is partly developing into groups of friends made up of Chinese tourists from Malaysia. At the Chao Mae Lim Ko Niew celebrations in 1996, the present author met a Chinese group from Kelantan that attends the celebrations regularly. This gives them the opportunity to meet their Chinese friends from Malaysia and Singapore in Southern Thailand with whom they share the Chinese event, stay in the grounds of the temple building, and go shopping for Chinese foods. During the celebration, they will see their Thai Chinese friends from other towns in Southern Thailand, in Hatyai, Yala, Betong and Sungai Golok. The regularity of the travel results in a multi-national Chinese community with Southern Thailand as its base. This demonstrates how the emergence of extended milieus partly questions our understanding of tourism. In Southern Thailand, Thai, Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese can meet each other as Chinese. Thus, journeying and travelling becomes an identical practice.

The activities of Chinese philanthropic and cultural associations, of religious temples, shrines and religious festivals, the maintenance of Chinese cemeteries, the continuous presence of Chinese private schools, the social networks of Chinese chambers of commerce, clubs (such as Rotary or Lions), alumni associations and the communication in six Chinese dialects (apart from Mandarin) show that Chinese identity is alive in Southern Thailand. The Sino-Thai generation partly rediscovers its Chineseness in the Thai language.

Moreover, the Chao Mae Lim Ko Niew celebrations not only help the government to cash in on travellers' money, but also to confirm the historical patron-client relationship between the Thai state, the royal family and the Chinese community. As Chaiyan Rajchagool has shown in more detail, the Chinese community in the lower South was a crucial partner of the monarchy and Sakdina of Siam as soldiers involved in social and military control and as tax farmers in the economic exploitation of the tributary provinces (Chaiyan 1994).[4]

The aggressive promotion of tourism has contributed to the commodification of a curse among the local Chinese upon the nearby un-

finished Kru Se mosque. Chaiwat reports that the legend, which was once an oral tradition, has turned into a written assault on the mosque as the house of God. The changing condition was perceived as a threat in the Malay-Muslim population. Kru Se mosque became a theatre for the renegotiations of Muslim identity (Chaiwat 1993). The activities of hundreds of Muslims who have offered their prayers at the Kru Se mosque in protest against the Chinese appropriation of sacred space have been closely observed by the National Security Council. In 1990, some organizers of the Dawah-Ansar Muhadjirun (remembering the Prophet's helpers in Medina and those who laid the way by following the Prophet from Mecca) were arrested. The events had a tremendous impact in the Thai newspapers, in comments and readers' letters. Chaiwat (1983) argues that the ancient myth has been reactivated at a time when the tide of the Islamic resurgence is being felt in the lower South. The demonstration of Muslim identity at Kru Se mosque is aimed at linking Pattani to the glorious past of the Malay sultanate of Patani and Langkasuka. The call for the lost state revokes the painful story of the Siamisation of the Malay Patani kingdom (see Chapter 3; Syukri 1985). For many Thai citizens, kingship has come to represent all that is sacred in Thai culture. The identification of the present king for the people is frequently staged in ritual, ceremonial and artistic shows. Sound-and-light presentations and elaborate fireworks are performed in every city and all civil servants, including university professors, are required to participate. The Muslim professors complain that they are forced to participate in government-initiated performances. This again confirms the prejudices of their Thai counterparts that they do not love the nation. Royal projects such as the informal handicraft education centre in Pattani or income-generating projects in Saiburi under the patronage of the Queen are supervised by provincial governments. The Queen has acquired a special significance in Southern Thailand and provides a figure to whom powerful women feel attached by strong emotional bonds. The grandmother of the Chinese Khunanurak family displays photographs to me, which symbolize the visit of the Queen to her and the shrine in her old Chinese home.[5]

One important dimension of the development of the master plan of the lower south is tourism. The treasures of Southern Thailand are now presented to the potential tourist on a map, featuring the cultural diversity of the South. The aim of the Tourist Authority of Thailand is to promote tourism, to develop the regional economy and to incorporate local tradition into the Thai national imaginary landscape. The Korlae boat race on the Nara river or the dove singing competition in Yala are illustrations of the folklorization of ethnic identity and the transformation of local symbols into tourist commodities.

The manifestation of Muslim identity reflects the symbiosis of the Thai government and the Chinese bourgeoisie, the concentration of the economy in the hands of Sino-Thai entrepreneurs and the marginalization of the Malay Muslim people. Second, it shows that the construction and revitalization of identity narratives are themselves a political action. Globalization facilitates the flow of religious and ethnic identity in many ways and puts the the borderland and the revitalization of identity in a new spotlight. Far from being new, religious identities are the product of century-old struggles.

Playing for a Muslim Wedding, South Thailand.

Sketching the Landscape: Some Illustrative Vignettes[6]

This section opens with biographies that illustrate the location of the middle class. The ethnography compares how (male) members define what it means to be a 'worthy person' (Lamont 1992).

These short vignettes aim to illustrate some typical features. The middle-class and upper-middle class men occupy new positions in society. The important transformation concerns the rise of a new strategic group of professionals, medical professionals, architects and engineers, entrepreneurs and civil servants. One feature of all men in our sample is the exercise of power. This power is exercised on different levels of society. Clearly, however, the men take leadership roles in

public life. Their intervention in society is legitimated by their educational capital, which in Southern Thailand is highly prestigious. In addition, the vignettes aimed to shed some light on the social habitus. The men presented have a clear image of a 'worthy person'.

This definition implies on the one hand a demarcated role at work and in the public sphere, but also the construction of symbolic boundaries with other classes, of feelings of inferiority and superiority and definitions of the self and the other. The growing self-confidence of the men is their social mobility, their achievements in personal life and their commitment in the public sphere.

This intervention in the public debate as well as their social standing is based on the increasing prestige of knowledge in society. More precisely, it is based on new systems of knowledge and professionalism which are being introduced into local society. These new pools of knowledge form the basis for fluid positions and new identities. The men are participating in different ways in public life in Southern Thailand.

The middle class is situated firmly in the local context. Significantly, as the Chinese entrepreneurs were situated strategically towards Western trading companies, the men in our sample serve as a mediator between local systems of knowledge and global systems of knowledge. Thus, the men become cosmopolitans with a keen interest in engaging with the world. It feels good to become cosmopolitan. The men carry with them the cultural baggage which they acquired during experiences abroad. They return home as learned and respected men who are able to channel the global into the local.

Somkiat

I got to know Somkiat in one of the workshops which was organized by Songkla Forum in a hotel at Songkla beach. The workshop, the organization of the workshop and its preparation is Somkiat's passion: a very gentle, open and generous personality, Somkiat engages himself and hopes to contribute something meaningful to society.

In addition, Somkiat's life project reflects a fragile balance between the loyalty towards his father and his desire to contribute something meaningful to society. Somkiat's intensive longing for a better society seems to me a nearly desperate expression for his wish of Somkiat to realize himself, in his own words, "to do something meaningful in life." Somkiat is longing to participate in this change, to be an initiator of this change and to take part in meaningful activities.

Somkiat is the descendant of a Chinese lineage in Hatyai and Sadao, one of the nine children of a Chinese entrepreneur and his four wives. Somkiat is the 'black sheep' of the Chinese lineage, because he is not a profit-minded person. Asked about his role in the family, he says that he gives little help in the business of his brothers, but he aims to represent 'the name' of his family in public life. His father is a Chinese entrepreneur who owns a casino in Sadao and who diversified into real estate and rubber plantations. Somkiat is managing the *mubaan jat san* for his mother; however, the business was hit by the economic crisis. In the eyes of his brothers, Somkiat is seen as a failure. Somkiat is also interested in doing business, but he aims to do business with a human heart. Thus, he told me that housing is a form of habitat, a way of life. In this sense, he wants to create a harmonious community by selecting the inhabitants. The cluster of houses could thus function as a community and everybody would support each other, the facilities provided by the company. In order to discuss issues of real estate, and ways of doing business, Somkiat invites entrepreneurs or professionals for informal talks at his home. Thus, a friend of Somkiat's, who has just returned from the United States, reported on his experiences and showed slides of house clusters as they are realised in North America.

Education plays a crucial role in his social projects. Somkiat took a B.A. at Ramkamhaeng University in Bangkok, and he told me that he always wanted to be a teacher. He has taken an honorary post in the Department of Business Administration at the Hatyai Campus. In addition, he helps in a project to reintegrate adolescents who have been in prison into society. Thus, Somkiat is always on the alert, prepared to join activities which he deems useful for what he calls a 'good society'.

Somkiat's projects include a private school, which he would like to design himself. He would like to dedicate his life to the 'future generation'. Somkiat is not opposed to the public school system, but would like to introduce some modern pedagogical patterns which he knows from the West. The school is one of his unfulfilled dreams. In addition, Somkiat has opened a book-store in which he aimed to sell good books, and invite the authors to public meetings; however, he found that his book-shop would only accumulate debt. Currently, he supports a local newspaper, called Focus South using the influential format of Manager Daily (*Pujatgarn*), and aims to create a platform for southern Thai audiences. Somkiat is travels regularly to Bangkok in order to meet his Ramkamhaeng alumni to learn from public life in Bangkok and to bring in similar activities to the South.

Somkiat says that he wants to be a person who is known to struggle for the good of society. He believes that people like him have to provide the seeds for a human social environment; he gives a picture of

Hatyai as a business city, contrasting it with the world in which he would like to live. In his words, "Hatyai businessmen are egoistic and in a state of fierce competition." The rich and influential meet in closely-knit circles, and are members of exclusive Clubs such as Rotary or Lion's Clubs.

Somkiat believes that a worthy person engages in the improvement of the self and of the society. While he does not question capitalism as such, he is looking for new ideas from his Bangkokian friends and tries to implement them in his 'place of birth' (*baan koet*). In fact, he regrets that his brothers are as materialistic and power-orientated as his father was. The social environment continues to be highly capitalistic, as Somkiat sees it. However, Somkiat feels comfortable in a role participating in voluntary organizations, and will be there, if new opportunities will open up. In this role he condemns the egoistic members of society who think only in terms of money. He is still looking for friends and for the fulfilment of his dreams.

Ismail

Ismail was introduced to me by a Muslim lecturer as the president of an association for Muslim businessmen. Ismail is a friendly, good-hearted person full of humour. Ismail is an upwardly-mobile trader who is expanding his import/export business to become a large-scale trader of frozen food. I visited Ismail regularly at his home-place. After a Friday prayer, I joined Ismail for a meeting on Islam ethics and morals. The session was accompanied by Malay healers who came from Malacca. The participants in this meeting aim to introduce an orthodox, intellectual, modern Islam as a life-form. I joined Ismail at his informal meetings with Muslim entrepreneurs where they discussed their situation as Muslim businessmen in combination with Muslim ethics. One of the subjects of discussion is the establishment of an Islamic bank. For Ismail and his friends, an Islamic bank would be an important step towards an Islamic economy. Muslim businessmen have to deal with Thai-Chinese banks. On the subject of banking, Ismail says: "Once you enter the bank you know that Muslim businessmen are not treated fairly." He says that Muslim traders have come to an understanding with 'stingy' Chinese middlemen in business life. However, he is particularly bitter about the Thai government. He complains that the government does not support them. From his point of view, the officials are corrupt, let themselves be invited to lunches, and generally, are not sensitive to Islamic culture.

In his own words, Ismail "dedicates his life to God". Therefore, while his world is that of commerce and business, he is eager to live up to his self-description as a defender of Muslim ethics: Ismail has founded an association of Muslim businessmen. This association in no way challenges the more established provincial chamber of commerce in terms of capital. However, from Ismail's perspective, it is challenging the moral codes and imposes Islamic ethics on business life. He points out that the association, while recent, enjoys considerable support from Muslim businessmen.

Ismail takes me to a friend in a local mosque. The meuzzin calls people to the Friday prayer. Ismail tells me that he aims to become a more knowledgeable Muslim and points out that the Malays Muslims have to struggle with the Thai political system. He complains bitterly about the local government, which does not help the Malay entrepreneurs, considering them pariahs. Because 'it is impossible to be Malay', they choose to be Muslim, Islam being the option for a modern identity. Ismail is proud to point out the progress of his own life-project in which he provides the best education available to his four children and is building a new house for his own family. The association of Muslim businessmen is raising a *Zhakat* from the donations of Muslim businessmen. Coming back from a business fair in Kuala Lumpur, Ismail states that Bahasa Melayu is attaining the status of a world language and Malaysia is quickly becoming a spiritual and economic centre of Islam. While the Chinese call the Malays Muslims 'lazy', Ismail would like to call the Chinese 'cheating' ('as people who would sell their own grandmother').

Ismail has woven close ties with his Muslim business fellows, being well-known in Yala. He points out that a 'worthy person' should be able to distinguish between heaven and hell, be faithful to his wife and be a good Muslim who fulfils his duties. Ismail is drawing cultural boundaries against Thai state officials and Chinese entrepreneurs, encapsulating himself in a Muslim public sphere, yet continuing his practical interaction with Chinese traders and Thai officials at work. Ismail is aware of his status as an entrepreneur who seeks to further his life project in taking a leadership role in his association for Muslim entrepreneurs.

Punrit

Khun Punrit has invested considerable time and effort to research the archives, to talk to family members and to screen the family's documents in order to publish the results in a splendid book about the Khu-

nanurak family's history. In addition, Punrit and his brothers established a foundation to take good care of the Lim Gor Niew shrine, the Chinese places of worship, and the graves. The foundation coordinates the preparations for the Chao Mae Lim Ko Niew festivals. Punrit thinks that he deserves to be a leader in the community as he develops efforts to organize Chinese cultural life. The documentation of his family's story is a specific memory, which is reenacted into the present and supports the social reputation of his family. The hobby developed into a passion and the Punrit and his brothers have invested 5 years of research to publish the results in a book, which allows a rare glimpse of the life of Chinese traders at the turn of the century.

While the family wealth from tin mining has vanished, the successors have put in efforts to maintain of the social standing of the family where Punrit is an entrepreneur dealing in marble and granite. His father paid for an educational sojourn in the United States where Punrit took a B.A. in Business Administration.

While the Khunanurak family has seen better days as influential Chinese tax farmers-turned-capitalists, Punrit's brothers have completed a university education and have established themselves as a doctor in a Hatyai hospital and as a lawyer in Pattani respectively.

Punrit and his Thai wife have three children together. Punrit has not only built up considerable cultural capital, he is also organizing Chinese entrepreneurs in the southern provinces. Punrit describes himself as a Thai patriot. He is worried about the resurgence of Islam in Pattani. From his point of view, Islam fundamentalism is a threat to national security and to the social order in Thai society.

Punrit's parents have invited us for a Sunday brunch in their old house. There, Punrit's mother shows me the old Chinese furniture from China, the porcelain and the art and decorations, which show the grandiosity of the Khunanurak lineage. Moreover, the photographs on the walls show the Khunanurak family hosting the Queen and other members of the Thai royal family during their visits to Pattani. At the week-end, Punrit takes me to their old British colonial cottage in the mountains of Yala, which goes back to the good old days when the Khunanurak family co-operated with Western companies in tin exploitation.

Kruathep

Khun Kruathep has invited me to take a look at his work on urban planning in Songkla. He has painted a vision of Songkla as a southern tourist pearl on the board of his municipality office in Songkla. His

driver and his van are waiting outside for us for a tour. He and his girlfriend are keen to buy land in the surrounding villages in order to develop apartments for Hatyai's busy people.

Kruathep explains to me about an ambitious bridge project on Songkla Lake. His plans to transform Songkla into a tourist resort do not permit the presence of slums. Kruathep wants to construct a market, which would create income opportunities for the poor. He looks down on the poor and says that everybody has to work.

His language competencies make Kruathep a cosmopolitan, with a keen desire to be in the world. His solid college education in urban planning makes him an indispensable expert in the urban planning of Songkla. Kruathep comes from a humble Thai family. Kruathep said that he took his destiny in his own hands. After his studies in a Bangkok college, he got a scholarship to further his studies in France. His education and experiences abroad brought him the worldview of a cosmopolitan with a glittery dimension. He is keenly aware of his educational advantage in his hometown of Songkla. While he stays with his mother and sisters, whom he supports, in a simple house, he has become a very influential planner of Songkla City. The mayor of Songkla who depends on various consultants has given Kruathep full freedom to carry out urban development from the government's purse, a fact that Kruathep has not been slow to use for the development of his own company.

Kruathep has a clear description of what a 'worthy person' means. 'Worthy' means achievement and continuous development of the self. Kruathep believes that a 'worthy person' must be outstanding in social skills and expertise. His expertise in urban planning is in high demand. Kruathep socializes only with his peers; associating only with cultured people. His studies abroad make him aware of his being Thai, favouring a Buddhism which is more secularly orientated. Because Kruathep has moved up the social ladder, he believes in achievement through his own power. He is interested in developing Songkla into the pearl of the south and maintains that slums and peasants 'hinder' the modernisation of Songkla and have to be eradicated. He wants to transform the slums into a big market that provides income possibilities for the poor. Kruathep situates himself in the elite circles of Songkla which have access to positions of power. Asked about his special relationship with the mayor, Kruathep said that the mayor trusts him. He feels that he has a 'mission' to carry out the modernization of his hometown.

Preparing Alms, Kedah, Malaysia.

Cosmopolitans and Locals

Thus, Somkiat, Ismail, Punrit and Kruathep become cosmopolitans with a keen interest in being in the world. According to Hannerz (1992: 252-256),

> " ... the cosmopolitan is a creature of the organization of diversity in world culture, and consequently deserves some attention, as a type."[7]

There can be no cosmopolitans without locals, representatives of more circumscribed territorial cultures. Hannerz (ibid.) argues that real cosmopolitans is a willingness to engage with the other, 'an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences.' Apart from the appreciative orientation, cosmopolitanism tends also to be a matter of competence. First of all, individuals have the willingness to seize opportunities to engage with transnational cultures. During long stays, or many short stays, they can explore another culture and build up skills more or less expertly within a particular system of meanings.

Hannerz argues that real cosmopolitans are never quite at home again; the cosmopolitan makes home one of his sources of personal

meaning. As Hannerz (ibid.: 254) says, 'Home is not necessarily a place where cosmopolitanism is in exile'. However, Hannerz (ibid.) admits, however that there are various ways the cosmopolitan may relate to his/her locale: 'Or home is really home, but in a special way: a constant reminder of a precosmopolitan past, a privileged site of nostalgia'. Somkiat, Ismail, Punrit and Kruathep all returned home after a long sojourn in another culture. Home is a comfortable place with familiar faces, where one's competence is undisputed but where for much the same reason there is some risk of boredom. As Hannerz explains, there is an apparently paradoxical interplay between mastery and surrender here. But even this surrender is a part of mastery:

> "The cosmopolitan's surrender to the alien culture implies personal autonomy vis-à-vis the culture where he originated. He has his obvious competence with regard to it, but he can choose to disengage from it. He possesses it, it does not possess him. Cosmopolitanism becomes proteanism" (ibid.: 253).

The cosmopolitan picks up from other cultures only those pieces, which suit himself. In fact, cosmopolitans can be dilettantes as well as connoisseurs. In other words, there is some ambiguity here. Whereas in the host society some individuals may experience hardships in adjusting to another system of meaning, another language and having to cope with loneliness, they do not come back with empty hands. With their newly acquired skills and expertise, the sojourners experience intensive social recognition and prestige in their home society.

What is cosmopolitan can be channelled into what is local. Because he has been in another, separate culture, the cosmopolitan acquires a specialised stock of knowledge. This enables the cosmopolitan to become a broker, an entrepreneur who makes a profit. 'It becomes their speciality to let others know what they have come across in distant places' (ibid.: 54). The ambiguity between surrender and mastery, dilettantes and connoisseurs can be illustrated with the examples of some individuals. Khun Somkiat was an active student in Bangkok Metropolis, where he took a bachelor's degree in law at Ramkamhaeng University. Although he felt estranged by the anonymity of the megalopolis and dislikes the stressful pace of life, he nevertheless returns to Bangkok regularly to benefit from the opportunities offered by a World City. In Hatyai, Somkiat is a sought-after and respected intermediary, who is away giving a helping hand. He has also taken up an honorary post as a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Management at Prince of Songkla University, Hatyai Campus.

Ismail has travelled to Northern Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur and Sumatra. He reports that his Malay counterparts regarded him as a second-class 'Malay'. Although Ismail had no problems communicating in the Malay dialect, he noted the differences between customs and language in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia. Nevertheless, Ismail will continue to visit Northern Malaysia in the future. Ismail is well informed about the IMT-GT project and the construction of an Islamic bank in Southern Thailand. In his home society in Yala, Ismail is well-respected for his social relationships with Malay-Muslim entrepreneurs and Islamic *ulema* in Malaysia.

Punrit experienced a culture shock in America and was also surprised to find Southern China in a state of despair and backwardness, despite his being well-versed in English and the bearer of Chinese cultural capital. Nevertheless, Punrit finds both qualities helpful in Southern Thailand, where he enjoys a high social prestige. At present, he is planning further excursions to Penang and Singapore to explore his family archives. In Patani, Punrit is a leader and node of communication with high social standing.

Kruathep had a long liaison with Western Europe. While he enjoyed a solid education in architecture, he experienced discrimination on the part of the private sector in France and Germany towards foreigners. Nevertheless, Kruathep mastered the French and German languages, learned to manoeuvre in another system of meanings and headed joint ventures. However, after his divorce from his Spanish wife, Kruathep returned to Songkla, where he is a much sought-after professional, well-equipped with foreign expertise, languages and social competencies.

In contemporary societies, mobility has become a primary activity of existence (Thrift 1996). Journeying and travelling have become an ordinary part of the everyday cultures of the new middle class. As can be seen from typologies of Somkiat, Ismail, Punrit and Kruathep, long journeys to other places have been crucial turning points and rites of passage in the life-courses and biographies of the parties concerned. Therefore, it is argued here that journeying and travel for education or work always include identical practices characteristic of the emerging travelling culture.

The reasons for moving for long durations or for many short durations are manifold: first, educational advancement is a prime reason to spend considerable periods of time outside Southern Thailand. Although the sojourn to another culture may involve some frustration, the rewards in the form of titles, diplomas and certificates more than recompense the investment made, because academic diplomas and language competencies are highly valued commodities in the home socie-

ty. Second, work is an important stimulus for journeying and travel. Social networks are woven on the way and import/export or trade involve travelling. Third, people will travel to somewhere to see it. Travel in this sense is continuous with status, and this kind of travel includes a marker of status. Such practices include pilgrimages, religious circles, study tours of museums and monuments or simply travelling for entertainment and pleasure. It is a crucial element of modern life to feel that travel and holiday are necessary.

The cosmopolitans are more involved in transnational cultures than others. This social class of liaison officers, or mediators, bridges the gap between the transnational and the local, as Hannerz explains: 'Insofar as they have greater access to metropolitan culture than most of their compatriots, they are the latter's informants about the world. As cultural brokers they are in part gatekeepers, deciding on what gets in and what will be kept out, ignored, explicitly rejected' (Hannerz 1992: 258).

The life histories and life paths of Somkiat, Ismail, Punrit and Kruathep also mirror social change in Southern Thailand and the spatial strategies of Thai, Malay and Chinese middle class segments. It is no accident that Somkiat moved to Bangkok, Ismail to Northern Malaysia, Punrit to Southern China and Northern America and Kruathep to Western Europe. The micro life-stories of Somkiat, Ismail, Punrit, and Kruathep reflect in miniature social change in Southern Thailand as a whole.

First, journeying and travelling become part of the global projects that locals harbour. Second, we may speak about an ontology of mobility. Third, and most important, the composition of social or mental maps on the part of the cosmopolitans can be observed. The cosmopolitans travel on global maps across a world of social networks. These personal maps, which enlarge with time and cultural contacts and connections bring the cosmopolitans-to-be to their distinctive places. From here, national and transnational connections are emerging, demarcating separate routes, which link Southern Thailand to the world. While the connections, social ties and networks may vary from case to case, social patterns emerge that can be summarized in a map showing the comparable practices that bring Malays to Mecca, Thais to Bangkok and Chinese to Penang and Singapore.

As a form of cultural brokerage, cosmopolitanism has a tremendous impact on the locality of the home society, which makes the locality an object of negotiation and reconstruction. The public culture is intertwined with the knowledge that social players have acquired in both local and global contexts. Migration and media are the forces that cause conditions 'in which ties of marriage, work, business and leisure

weave together various circulating populations with various kinds of locals to create localities that belong in one sense to particular nation-states, but are, from another point of view, what we might call translocalities' (Appadurai 1995: 44).

Extending Networks

The idea of home has to be divorced analytically from the idea of locality. As Dürrschmidt (2001) explains, the notion of home no longer contradicts the notion of mobility, "for it derives from people's ability to make themselves feel at home at different places."

Furthermore, the unlinking of 'the locale' and 'milieu' does not necessarily imply 'rootlessness' or 'homelessness'. Rather, 'social relations across distance show the very ability of the individual to actively 'identify home' in an ongoing construction and organisation of interlaced categories of space and time.' The 'personal milieu', defined as situated configuration of meaning and action, "is potentially stretchable across infinite time-space distances."

It will be argued here that the cosmopolitans are in a position to transform pre-existing cultural idioms and to create new identities and new boundaries. The rediscovery of Chineseness and the revivalism of Islam in Southern Thailand are given here as examples of the rise of cultural identities as alternatives to the landscapes of state-related national identities. Chaiwat states that conflicts may result between the Malay Muslims, Thai authorities and the Chinese community in an ongoing process of identity formation.

The personal networks across distance in identity formation illustrate the economic, political and symbolic strategies of between the nation-state and cultural globalization. These cosmopolitans are establishing a public culture in Southern Thailand, in which private lifestyles are a subject of public discourse and that this public culture is about the social spatialization and the shaping of cultural spaces, as noted by Chaiwat (1993). Moreover, in the process of appropriating identification, the players are constantly drawing boundaries to the cultural 'other'.

Children at Prayers in Narathiwat, South Thailand.