Conclusion

Debating Morality and the Nation in Southern Thailand

In the escalating cultural competition, standards of morality are styl-ized as questions of cultural distinction and political legitimization. During my fieldwork in Songkla and Patani in 1995/96 and in 1998, competitive life orders provided the cultural codes of a passionate dis-course on good society. In the following, I want to show that the de-bate on morality reflects political struggles in Southern Thailand and that family constructs and gender relations are not only negotiations in the private sphere, but symbols which patrol the borders of the nation-state.

Wat Sathing Phra, Mural, Songkla, South Thailand.

After the Nation-State?

The nation-state has come under close scrutiny from scholars in Southeast Asia (Anderson 1983, Evers/Schiel 1988, Brown 1994). Generally speaking, the debate has benefited from a boom in post-colonial and post-modern studies which emphasize the fragmentation of political, economic, and cultural structures of the state in a context of transnationalism and globalization. Yet if we are honest, we know very little about how the nation-state is negotiated and contested in everyday life. This is, as Herzfeld (1997) notes, "because anthropologists have largely shunned the state or reproduced its essentialism by taking official ideology as the truth about what the nation-state is actually about." The notion of the state as a bounded entity is not helpful in understanding how people are influenced by the modern state. We propose to explore the ways in which people are negotiating the paradoxes and tensions between personal and national identity. The notion of the border is helpful in deconstructing the state and its mechanisms. In this framework, the border is not limited to the physical border, but includes borderlines on different levels, including ethnic and religious boundaries.

As Herzfeld (1997) explains, the anthropology of the nation should aim to avoid both top-down and -up approaches. We need to know how the various borderlines are negotiated in different cultural and social settings or arenas. Like Herzfeld, I make no excuse for comparing the cultural intimacy of morality to the intellectual baggage of what the nation is actually about. Nation-states like to describe themselves in intimate terms of home and kinship, which endorse the populations in their territories. The German Fatherland comes to mind, as does the intimate Thai terminology of 'home' (*baan*) and 'kinship' (*piinong*), including the members of the Thai family. Anderson's (1983) imagined community, which has been developed in the context of Southeast Asia, says very little about the reproduction and contestation of the nation in the symbolism, emotion and struggle of everyday life.

I recall a long interview with a civil servant in Yala, originally from the southern province of Phatthalung, whose wife is working for the government television channel 11. This bureaucrat always linked loyalty to issues of home and family. He added family-planning to a long list of what defines the good citizen and included Thai literacy, the performance of the Thai Wai greeting, and participation in Thai Buddhist rituals. He contends that Muslims think that family planning is against Islamic rules, that they have too many children, are not interested in education and that their children do not grow up as good citizens and

compared this 'immoral' behavior with his own family situation and his perception that two children is an ideal family size to guarantee high education and good future prospects. The centrality of the family and its intimate link to the nation is not arbitrary or accidental. Rather, the family, the cultural images of the family, the discourse on the family and its organization and role are key discourses and symbol of the cultural contest in South Thailand and in the region.

In an informal discussion, a Muslim intellectual compared Thailand to a brothel and likened government officials to women and tea-money. Again, the family was brought up without my asking for it. Children are seen as a gift from God. Thai families who limit themselves to one or two children are ridiculed. Here too, family constructs and gender relations are in the centre of identity. Music and dance are seen as temptations to the body and should be forbidden. I remember a discussion in which a model student points out that the boys should cover their knees while playing soccer, because 'the Thai are watching us'. Sexuality is encouraged in the boundaries of the married couple and the private home. How often have Muslim teachers asked me about my private life and supposed that as a foreigner I will surely have a Thai girlfriend, although my partner and I were together, with our baby, during my fieldwork. The gossip and inquiry about the family is also an instrument of control.

Finally, the Thai Buddhist cosmopolitans in Songkla turn to the topic of Buddhism in order to describe what has gone wrong in the Thai 'home' (*baan koet*). Once more, the well-being of the family is singled out as a criterion for the well-being of society as a whole. It is said that in a time of change, greed and consumerism violate the social. Husbands stay away from home and drink alcohol. People do not respect the elderly and give up the local tradition. On the basis of home and family, my informants construct their visions, claims, and utopias for a good society. The representation of identity and modernity has a metaphorical, performative aspect, too. What is often dismissed as mere anecdote, are the stories that are crucial for the reproduction of national intimacy. As Herzfeld (ibid.) notes, by criticizing and complaining about the state, people also confirm and contribute to its shadowy existence.

Debating Morality

As Maila Stivens (1998) points out, in current debates on Asian values, the family and women's bodies loom large in the discourses of the

states in Southeast Asia. In the current resurgence of identity and religion, family constructs and gender relations are being negotiated at the level of the individual and the level of the community. What is the rationality of debating and insistence on standards of moral behaviour? How about the purpose of cultural performance in public space? The communication of moral standards defines cultural identities and the boundaries of the social world. Moral behaviour is used to distinguish between good and bad, between us and them, in narratives of the self and of the other. It is the lifestyle, the food preferences, an item of dress, the organization of leisure, the participation in religious activities and meeting and avoidance practices that are used as boundaries of ethnic identity that can be displayed in public space. The discourse on the moral state of society should not be dismissed as anecdotal.[1] In Songkla and Patani, a resurgence of moralization has surely taken place.[2] The middle class takes on the roles of entrepreneurs and guardians of the mores. I have argued that the moralization creates both solidarity and contempt. The granting of moral qualities produces dignity and social recognition, whereas refusal to do so insults. Furthermore, I suggest that by using essential and binary oppositions of good and bad, social players (Buddhists and Muslims) negotiate power in the nation-state. It is by paying serious attention to subjective strategies of the self at all that we are able to decipher how people negotiate the nation-state and its political ideology in everyday life. By doing no more than looking carefully at different levels of social organization, we are able to "get inside this ongoing production of static truths" (Herzfeld 1997: 10).

The ideology of the state makes substantial use of metaphors of the body to define diligent moral behaviour (*khon dii*).[3] Stereotypes used in the ideological baggage contrast clean and dirty bodies. Bodies are regulated and disciplined in the Thai polity, especially in school. Negative stereotypes of the Malay Other include poor sanitation, fanatical bodies, veiled bodies or racial remarks. Development focuses on the regulation and control of the body in the streets. Practices of reformist Buddhists in Songkla and resurgent Muslims in Patani focus centrally on the control and the discipline of the body, strategies of embodiment and enselfment. Reformist Buddhists emphasize the relationship between body, mind, and society. The loss of social stability and comfort in the contemporary urban environment of endless disruption and homelessness characterizes the pathological body: greed and stress are the results. The body is harnessed by contemplation and meditation. Radical Muslims in Patani apply Shari'a laws in the regulation of bod-

ies. Thus, ironically, teachers, politicians and intellectuals use official idioms in the pursuit of highly unofficial personal goals (Herzfeld 1997: 2-3). The social players, Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims, use cultural forms in direct opposition to the state. The everyday rhetoric of Thai Buddhists in Songkla and Malay Muslims in Patani are different parts of the same communicative system centring on the protection of the body from the harmful influences from the West (Horstmann/ Schlee 2001). Ironically again, the embodiment of the moral discourse of social actors in Songkla and Patani participates in the reproduction and stabilization of the political ideology of the nation-state by playing according to the state's rules.

Political Careers in Songkla

Using terms related to home, belonging, and place of birth, civil groups aim to build up emotional bonds to Songkla. Borrowing from the discourses of Thai intellectuals, the concept of community culture (*watthanatham chumchon*) is praised in an attempt to discover local identity and to establish what 'the local' is in relation to Bangkok. The communal framework makes use of the spiritual resources of the Bhudhadhasa movement, which has followers in all parts of Thailand in academic and intellectual circles (Suchira 1991). The movement has been led and institutionalized by a core group of local intellectuals who have taken a grip on Songkla's public space. These core people are senior figures from educational institutions, such as the Ratchapat Institute, the Teacher's College, Thaksin University and Prince of Songkla University. The team is supported by a number of groups and networks such as NGOs, environmental groups, individual professionals, community media, and Buddhist foundations.

The Bhudhadhasa movement adds moral weight and spiritual meaning to the production of locality. The emphasis on human development serves to keep it distinct from both the world of economic profit and political power. The organization quickly incorporates representatives from the business world and the local government of Songkla. Conversely, civil society is quickly absorbed by the state. Local leaders are not turning against the state; indeed, they have political ambitions themselves and strive for individual careers in the parliamentary system.

The leadership uses the community media as a springboard to develop their personal political style, to become prolific a media star, and to propagate political strategies. While the leaders stress their proximity

to political power, the lack of political power is of concern to the project for political reform and democracy in particular. The leadership admits the lack of executive political power in their report summarizing the activities of the groups (see Vichai 1998).

While the people's organizations arrange numerous seminars to promote the fruits of political reform, they hardly seem able to apply the new laws at all. Thus, rather than challenging the state, some leaders prepare the ground for their own personal careers in formal political processes. In contrast, the focus on the field of life politics is partly a result of the political limitations of local groups. The people's organizations set the rules for an expansion of public spheres, in which new fields, family, the quality of life, nature, and Buddhism are occupied by Songkla's rising middle class groups. While hitherto the financial support for NGOs came from international donor agencies and continues do so, Songkla Prachakom enjoys the financial support of the local government and local business. This endorsement illustrates the new role of Prachakom in promoting social integration. However, it also highlights the dilemma of being incorporated into the strategies of business and state.[4] The groups aim to change the political system from 'within,' but–as the leaders themselves admit–they largely fail to do so.

The cultural tools of Songkla Prachakom are significant building elements in negotiating Thai culture. The revitalization of local traditions and crafts points to a process of local self-consciousness and self-assertion. Songkla's people's organizations are in active contact with other middle class groups in Thailand, such as *klum rao rak* Phetchaburi, Bangkok Forum, or groups in Nakhorn Sri Thammarat. The image of the Thai family is upheld, but the Southern Thai roots are emphasized. The organizations are integrated into Buddhism, but appropriate the modern, intellectual discourse of Phra Bhudhadhasa to legitimize their intervention in public life. The people's organizations constitute a patriotic movement that stresses the independence of Songkla in relation to Bangkok, but that nevertheless calls Southern Thailand 'home.' Thus, Thainess is reproduced at the boundaries of the movement.

In the long run, Songkla Prachakom may develop into a more formalized, more rational association that stabilizes the local state and provides it with much needed legitimacy to rule. The key figures in the core group are already preparing themselves for big political careers. The core group will have to deal with the integration of competing sets of parties and discourses, such as the Hatyai Chamber of Commerce, the slum communities of Songkla, the peasant communities around

Songkla Lake and the NGOs. *Ajaarn* Aree Rangsiyogit explains to me that the parties have had to adjust to the purpose of Songkla Prachakom. Thus, The leadership has to fulfil the Herculean task of mediating between conflicting interests. The leadership borrows from discourses of Thai intellectuals, such as Dr. Prawes Wasi.

The transformation of the Thai locality in Songkla is deeply embedded in the cultural transformation of Thailand. Discourses on local wisdom and community culture are flourishing in academic and intellectual circles (Suchart 1999a, 1999b), and the master discourse of Mor Prawes Wasi is a very influential discourse in contemporary Thailand.

Leading Thai intellectuals are invited in to legitimize the people's organizations. Mor Prawes Wasi was invited to open the provincial Songkla Prachakom in 1996, in which the local Thai state, people's organizations, and NGO's are supposed to co-operate. Likewise, the respected politician and businessman Anand Panyarachun was invited in 1997 to legitimize the Political Reform project which would implement the new constitution in the face of resistance from the old establishment in Songkla/Hatyai.

The social network of the Songkla Thai middle class integrates ideas in a process of increasing national integration, while the strong emotional construction of locality pushes a form of Thai-Thai identity. The people's organizations in Songkla are well embedded into a national network of 'people's organizations' called city-net. This network comprises the urban middle class and focuses on lifestyles.

New developments in Buddhism play a conspicuous role in supporting the legitimization of Songkla Prachakom. The people's organizations in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Songkla use reform Buddhism as an instrument of power. The reception of rational, scientific interpretations of Theravada Buddhism is used to legitimize visions, claims and utopias of a just moral order and the political participation of the urban middle classes. The teachings of reformist monks (Phra Bhudhadhasa, Phra Thepwethi, Phra Paisan and Phra Panyanantha) are cited (see Jackson 1989).

The core group of a dozen or so people in Songkla Prachakom have become very powerful figures in Southern Thailand. The movement derives from the closely knit social network of these few core members. They are preparing for political careers in political parties, in local government, as senators, members of parliament. In the future, the network may well transform itself into a formal institution, such as the 'political reform project.' Public Buddhism is used as a cultural tool and spiritual umbrella to legitimize the activities of Songkla Prachakom and

for secular ends. The ideas are derived from contemporary Thai intellectual discourses on 'local wisdom' which engage the Thai state in a debate about development. Thus, discourses on 'local wisdom' and 'Buddhist spirituality' are not local discourses, but are part of national and global NGO discourses on alternative development. A relatively unorthodox interpretation of Theravada Buddhism is used for secular, political ends. The reinterpretation of Thainess and citizenship in the boundaries of Songkla Prachakom is central to the efforts of core members to push for a local identity which on the one hand permits the strengthening and demarcating of the locality and on the other hand is aloof enough to help support the ambitions of southern Thai personalities to participate in politics on a national level. In summary, the people's organizations in Songkla are attempting to organize civil society in Songkla/Hatyai on their own.

Thus, People's organizations" develop in conjunction with the rise of regional identity and new urban self-confidence. The transformation of the Songkla locality is developing in tandem with new developments in reformist Buddhism and its critics in contemporary Thailand. The construction of 'Buddhist spirituality' derives from discourses of popular Thai intellectuals on the Bangkok scene. The people's organizations, which are dominated by a handful of influential persons, succeed in mediating between competing political interests, business, NGOs, and labor, promoting social integration under the umbrella of Songkla Prachakom. The foundation 'Love Our Hometown' (*rak baan koet*) helps sustain a local identity. Similar foundations have been established in other towns in Thailand, e.g. in Phetchaburi and Patthalung.

The people's organizations are organizing civil society in close relation to the local Thai state. In doing so, local Thai agency is negotiating the relationship between centre and periphery in contemporary Thailand. In fact, Songkla Prachakom's core group has domesticated the NGOs, changing their anti-state attitude, and involving them in co-operation and interaction with the local government. In this way, the people's organizations have participated in the re-constitution and functioning of the local state and its policies; for instance, the mayor of Songkla has given an address to the media in which he explains that the local government needs the assistance of people's organizations to cope with 'pressing problems'.[5]

Local activities are subtle forms of local appropriation of the state that tend to stabilize its structures and provide it with additional legitimacy. Thus, the local state endorses and supports the activities of Songkla Prachakom. As a result, locality and local state constitute each

other mutually. The nature of the state and the nature of the people's organizations are transformed as a result of this interaction. The social integration of civil society under the umbrella of locality help stabilize the local state, while the national networks of Songkla Prachakom in turn help stimulate and reinforce the process of national integration. Meanwhile, academic and professional leaders of the locally-based social movement have emerged as a strategic group that is increasingly able to spread its discourse through organizational structures and community media. Indeed, the inclusion of Songkla Prachakom in the political process may result in a hybridization and inclusion of individual members in the state (Evers/Schiel 1988).

Cultural Bonds Between Patani and the Middle East

Focusing on the negotiation of Muslim intellectual figures, positions, and locations in the changing Muslim public sphere, I show how local stages of Muslim social virtue are embedded within systems of reference to the Middle East (Horstmann 1999). Muslim intellectuals reconstruct the centrality of the Patani locality for the early spread of Islam in the Malay Peninsula in the fifteenth century. Hurgronje notes (1931) that the Patani *ulema* in Mecca established close links with their communities back home via religious students who came on pilgrimages. The emergence of transnational social spaces in the latter part of the nineteenth century created the bonds of Patani to the Middle East and contributed in no minor way to the influence of Islamic reformist thinking in Patani. The protracted conflict of the separatist Malay movement drew the attention of the Muslim world and strengthened connections to the Islamic heartland. One result has been an unprecedented flow of external resources for Islamic education. Traditional institutions of Islamic knowledge have been challenged by recent attempts of Muslim scholars at purifying them and at introducing the sanctity of 'authentic' Islam. In the local cultural transformation and process of Islamic self-awareness, Islamic locality and local knowledge is being reconstructed by way of language, methods of breathing and reading, of imagining, of dressing, and approaching the social 'other' (Stauth/Buchholt 1999, Introduction). The restructuring of Islamic education, the introduction of new dress codes, the reordering of gender relationships intensified in the latter 1990s as new ideas and worldviews were introduced by Middle East-educated urban scholars. The traditional imams of the Sufi tradition are losing their grip on Islamic public space. They are being replaced by Shari'a-oriented religious spe-

cialists. The restructuring of the Islamic school by orthodox scholars has profound implications for the way local Islam and Islamic lifestyles are reproduced in Patani Muslim society. The streamlined *pondoks* provide the basis for the social reputation and social power of scholars such as Dr. Ismail Lutfi. His free communication with Middle-Easterners, his having lived and studied in the Middle East and his knowledge of Arabic give Lutfi prestige in academic and intellectual circles. His staging of Islam as social virtue and public event in Patani, Yala, and Narathiwat is a new way of communicating Muslim authority in the Islamic public space. The authentic Islam is a convincing cultural tool for the cultural autonomy and social organization of the Malays in Patani. Lutfi and his followers aim to reorganize the traditional system of Islamic education and to streamline it according to purist and scripturalist lines. The increases in Mosque attendances, Islamic attire, Halal consumerism, and staging of Islamic virtue are related to cultural globalization. The reconstruction of local Islam in Patani is linked to the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. The reformist Islamic mass movement provides a seductive role model and option for identification. The revitalization of the Malay language and Malay culture among academic and intellectual circles in Malaysia is a source of identification for Patani Muslims. Cross-border movements are increasing in importance and facilitate Muslim networks between Patani Muslims and Islamic movements in Malaysia. Muslim scholars from Southern Thailand are in touch with the *ulema* which represent the leadership of the Islamic Party, the PAS, which governs in Kelantan and Trengganu. Apart from informal Malaysian-Patani Muslim circles and study groups, Patani Muslims benefit from opportunities in higher education, in Islamic studies. Being Muslim, speakers of Malay, and Thai citizens, Patani Muslims develop multiple forms of political and cultural citizenship. The presence of the Islamic media, the impact of Islamic images from the Muslim world and the rise of the *Hajj*, the pilgrimage, have strengthened the connections of Patani, which hitherto has been so marginal to the Muslim world, to the Islamic heartland. The global character of locality does not impede Muslims' participation in the national political process. The Patani Muslim community is represented in the Thai parliament and seeks to achieve cultural autonomy through participation on the Thai political stage. The increasing presence of the Thai state, education, language, and Thai media in Patani does not lessen the identification with the *umma*. The re-construction of Islam under the leadership of scholars is a political strategy, the aim of which is to negotiate autonomy for Muslims in Patani.

Transformation of Locality in Southern Thailand: Visions, Claims and Utopias

It is interesting to compare locally-based movements in Songkla with Bhudhadhasa's reformist Buddhist movement. Bhudhadhasa's movement has been carefully analysed by Suchira (Suchira 1991): it began with a core of only four or five local people in Chaya who gathered to discuss religious problems. His ideas, disseminated through his many writings, provided the basis for an urban religious movement. Suchira argues that the expansion of Bhudhadasa's movement derives from Bhudhadhasa's teachings. His sermons and lectures were tape-recorded and published by his followers. A striking feature of Buddhadhasa's movement is its organization. So informal is its organization that many of its followers were led to believe that it has no organization:

> "There are neither criteria nor a set of tests for distinguishing those who are accepted for membership from those who are not; no committees and official duties of any kind; no law and rules within the movement; no regular pledges of financial support were organised" (Suchira 1991: 256).

Bhudhadhasa's movement is a fluid-type of organization in which many special-purpose sub-groups form and disband. Followers have organized themselves to spread the teaching through activities such as the establishment of forest monastic centres, public libraries, press houses and face-to-face talks. Bhudhadhasa's movement spreads unofficially, through various forms of communication, including word of mouth. Although the movement has no formal members, it is characterized by intimacy and devotion.

Special sub-groups form and disband within this fluid-type of organization. No census of followers is ever taken, and there are no institutional devices for recruiting followers. This very fluid-type of organization has not come about because of an inability to set up an effective organization. The flexibility of the movement seems to be its strength and contributes in no small way to its rapid spread and expansion. Followers identify themselves as members on the basis of their personal religious understanding and not the basis of formal membership. Some scholars refer to the followers of Bhudhadhasa as 'unorganized masses'. Bhudhadhasa's movement took no step towards challenging any of the established Sangha with an organization of its own. Life and teaching at *Suan Mokkh* (the garden of liberation) has a

special meaning. *Suan Mokkh* does not function as an administrative headquarters with branch offices but as a "centre of ideology" (Suchira 1991: 257). It can be said that *Suan Mokkh* has become the most influential spiritual center of reformist Buddhism in academic and intellectual circles in contemporary Thailand. The monk-followers of Bhudhadhasa have become very influential public intellectuals.

As to the structure of Songkla Prachakom, a closely-knit network of professionals, university lecturers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges, and entrepreneurs organizes itself in committees and its members occupy positions such as president, vice-president, etc. It would seem that there are no formal members and no sanctions against members. The motivation to join the movement seems to derive from the social recognition obtained by participation in the activities of the people's organizations. The rise of the movement is connected with the process of urbanization and urban culture. Volunteering and sharing are not only a ways of growing, but also a means of discipline or even an instrument of social control.

'Bhudhadhasa changed my life', is a phrase often repeated by respondents. Both monks and lay followers change their life conduct as a result of their involvement with the movement. The cultural construction of livelihood or lifestyles is a crucial dimension of participation in and personal devotion to the movement. The life-conducts, the new manner of breathing, meditation, attire and the food, adopted in the movement are new skills and habitual forms that are developed to find solutions to individual crises. Thus, Locally-based movements are intensively involved in the cultural re-construction of family and gender relations, in which the reception and processing of globalized images of family, love, and sexuality play such an important role. 'Chinese' cults and ritual practices in the south, 'Thai-Buddhist' reformist ideas and morals and the Islamist re-construction act as innovative agents in the making of moralities in contemporary Southern Thailand. The incorporation of *Kuan Im* into Thai society as an icon has arisen from her securely based presence in multiple sacred sites and spaces in the south (Hamilton 1999). The rapid spread of her influence into Bangkok and throughout the country has resulted from her identification with forces and lifestyle that are associated with virtue, renunciation, celibacy, and compassion. The most important aspect of her presence is the quelling of negative spiritual forces through the operations of her own compassion. *Kuan Im* is also central to the upsurge (or establishment) of those meditation, worship, and chanting groups popular particularly with women, which is a continuation of popular reli-

gious practice. Her elevation to cult status among the urban Thai Buddhists brings back into view elements of cultural practice and identity that had been consciously or unconsciously suppressed.[6]

The formula of the Thai intellectual Prawes Wasi, 'local wisdom,' is taken up to counter that which is seen as a shaking of the foundations of Thai Buddhist culture. Playing out the role of the 'parent,' it is not an accident that particular attention is given to the Thai youth and to the Thai children. In the beginning, the social movement tackled social problems such as pollution, AIDS, and drug abuse. Civil groups used reformist Buddhist philosophy to legitimize their activities. Later, political reforms raised considerable hopes for the political participation of the movement's informal leadership. Muslims also have to respond to the Thai public sphere as a stage where Muslim identity and culture have to be performed. So we can only speak here of an Islamic public culture as an appendix to the Thai public culture. This becomes even more obvious if one relates it to the sphere of public education and the different ways in which Islamic education is related to this. It is important to understand that the construction of the family, gender relations, women's place, and women's dress are important sites of the local cultural reconstruction of Islam, in which local conceptualizations are embedded into systems of reference to the Middle East and in which Arab symbols are channeled into local Muslim *pondoks*. The recreated construction of family, gender, love, and sexuality maintains the moral boundary to the Thai Buddhists and constitutes an explicit criticism of sexual practices in Thai urban culture. In addition, the institutionalization of gender seclusion and veiling in the Islamic school in a minority situation is a break with Thai Buddhist 'normality,' in which the *Hijab* is a symbol of otherness (Chaiwat 1994).[7]

Locality, the Public Sphere and the Making of Moral Space

The visions of the people's organizations in Songkla are derived from reformist-Buddhist social movements, networks, and ideas, which spread rapidly in Thailand. Bhudhadhasa's movement in particular has inspired popular Thai intellectuals and has expanded quickly to the national and even global level. The idea of a 'good life' is rapidly expanding to other places in urban Thailand, such as Korat, Chiangmai, and Phetchaburi. The teaching is directed at the laity rather at monks. Buddhism is interpreted as a way of life. As Ajarn Aree Rangsiyogit says:

"Buddhism has become fossilized. We desire a Buddhism engaging in this worldly activity."

Suan Mokkh, the forest hermitage, reflects Bhudhadhasa's revitalization of the forest monk tradition as well as his ideals to promote the substance of Buddhism. The monks lead their lives simply and close to nature. The focus is a modern building, which is called the 'spiritual theater' and which is used as an audio-visual center where Buddhism is propagated through paintings, slides, and films.[8] As Pannipa explains:

> "We want to use Buddhadasa's Buddhism as a spiritual umbrella for our activities."

The production of locality is expanding to the global level, spreading Bhudhadhasa's ideology from *Suan Mokkh* to Songkla, Bangkok and to the United States.[9] The expansion of Bhudhadhasa's movement was facilitated by his monk followers (such as Phra Pannananda in Nonthaburi, Bangkok), who spread Bhudhadhasa's teaching. A Buddhist organization on the lines of *Suan Mokkh* has been established in Chiang Mai. A Native American monk follower, Phra Santikaro, is disseminating Bhudhadhasa's writings in English and travels widely in Asia and the United States. He is serving as acting abbot of the new training community of foreign monks at *Suan Mokkh*.

The transformation of Islamic locality is occurring in the frame of the south-south patterns of cultural exchange and religious diffusion. Islamization in relation to Middle-Eastern systems of reference in marginal spaces such as Patani attracted unprecedented external assistance and attention from the Muslim world, especially from Saudi Arabia. This breed of new scholars is acquiring a specific habitus, which is a hybridization of local and Arab styles and languages. Scholars make ample use of Western technologies and media to propagate the new teaching. The ideas of Lutfi and his guru-followers can be described as utopian thinking (Maaruf 1999):

'In utopian thinking, the collective unconscious, guided by wishful representation and the will to action, hides certain aspects of reality. It turns its back on everything which would shake its belief or paralyse its desire to change things.'[10]

In the utopian mentality, Lutfi aims to imitate the sanctity of Medina in Thailand. The Islamic networks of Lutfi and his followers extend to Bangkok, Kelantan, Malaysia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Debating Morality in Southern Thailand

Nostalgia is a driving force in a discourse on the moral crisis. Revealingly, communities in Songkla and Patani all participate in nostalgia and homesickness. Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim segments of the new middle class find advantages in using cultural images of the past in their attempt to shape cultural space. Government officials and healers from Kuala Lumpur and Malacca are looking for the original cradle of Islamic education in Patani, participating in Friday prayers and discussion groups on Islamic morality. They are looking for the sources to authenticate their religious experience. They look at rural Patani as a cradle of Islamic civilization that converted early to Islam. The urban is devalued as a site of consumerism and desire, and the marginal is being upgraded as authentic and pure. In Songkla, teachers and artisans collect old photos of the past Songkla. Here again, the city is devalued as anonymous and cold. The old local culture is described as warm and lively. The temple, it is said, was once the center of the community, neighbors used to help each other, and the young would respect the old. In trips to Siam villages in Kelantan and Kedah, they are attracted by the minority status of famous abbots or want to visit villages on putative pilgrimage routes. Revealingly, nostalgia is also a key part of the ideological baggage of the nation-state, which constantly repeats the grandeur of the past, the goldenness of Thai civilization and the legitimization of the royal family as a parent of the Thai nation. Herzfeld (1997) argues that,

> " ... ironically, by reformulating or outflanking the official idioms, politicians, teachers, and intellectuals of different color participate in the validation of the state as the central legitimizing authority over their lives. By complaining about the moral crisis, in an ethnic style, or simply by talking of 'it' *they all contribute to making the state a permanent fixture in their lives*" (Herzfeld 1997, emphasis added A.H.).

In this sense, transnational Thai Buddhists who invent pilgrimage routes in northern Malaysia and transnational Muslims who consume sermons of Malaysian shaikhs on the Islamic organization of the family and gender are more integrated into the Thai nation than ever. The identity politics in Southern Thailand construct and shape the communal space in local and global forms of communication. Lives in South Thailand are presented and negotiated in the cultural space of national

intimacy. The idea of morality emerges as a central, yet conspiciously neglected category of the intellectual contest, which is played out in South Thailand in the nineteen-nineties and beyond. In the escalating cultural competition, identities of moral communities are essentialised, but have a common focus: the intimacy of morality.