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Learning to See the Satsana as a Religion: Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an (Beliefs of Friends) by Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip

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Learning to See the Satsana as a Religion:
Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an (Beliefs of Friends)
by Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip

by
Sarah D. Calhoun

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A Note on Transliteration

For ease of reading, I have chosen to not transliterate Thai tone markers or vowel length. I followed the Royal Institute of Thailand transcription system, except that (in the spirit of the Library of Congress system) I transliterated จ as /c/, อ as /o’/, and อ as /u’/. For personal names, I have tried to use the most common transliteration or, for individual works, the given English spelling. I have presented Pali and Sanskrit words with full diacritics.
Introduction

Beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing on through the early twentieth century, Thai intellectuals became alert both to the category of religion in general, and to the specific religions that were crystallizing in the colonizing and colonized worlds. Their appropriation of these categories transformed the traditional notion of the satsana, the unique heritage of the Buddha, into Buddhism, merely one of numerous satsanas (religions). Certain contours of this large-scale change in the categories of religious self-understanding emerge when we consider the choices of two Thai authors, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, in their book, Beliefs of Friends (Latthi Kho'ng Phu'an or ลทธของเพื่อน). In it, they present their vision of “friends of different races,” such as Europeans and Indians by engaging in the practice of satsana priap-thiap, the analogue of European comparative religion. They compile discussions about various satsanas (religions) and latthis (beliefs), which they see being practiced by phu'an (friends, people) around them. In Beliefs of Friends, in fact, the categories of satsana and latthi, which are quite distinct in Buddhist discourse, slowly approach each other in meaning and even being to overlap each other in certain circumstances. Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip explore and expand the meanings of satsana

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1 I will be referring to these authors by their pen names, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, since I am discussing how they exist in a literary realm. However, their real names are Phraya Anuman Rajadhon and Phra Saraprasert, respectively.
2 Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, Latthi Kho'ng Phu'an (Phranakhon: Samnakphim Khlang Witthaya, 1971). While the book has never been translated, I will be referring to it by my English rendering of the title, and all undated references to Beliefs of Friends are to this 1971 edition. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.
3 Thai: chat
4 T: chat farang, Pali: jāti-˚
5 T: chat khaek, P: jāti-˚
and *latthi* as they try to define them in a way that fits into an emerging global conversation about the religions of the world.

Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip’s writing drew on a tradition of the study of religion which was started in Thailand by King Mongkut, and continued by Kings Chulalongkorn and Wachirawut and Prince Wachirayan. All four men approached the study of religion focused on apologetics, rationalization, and the separation of a secular material realm from a spiritual realm. It is within this ethos that Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip wrote the series of essays that became *Beliefs of Friends*. They use the words, *satsana*, *latthi*, *satsana priap-thiap*, and *phu’an* in a world where there is a considered sense of human difference concomitant with both a sense of Buddhist solidarity and a sense of Thainess.

Their experiments with these words, however, help to clarify for them what it means to relate to others both within their own country, and in other parts of the world. Their book can be read as part of a growing push for “the nation” in a modern world that is dealing with the effects of colonialism. Although neither the authors nor their work are really unique in this regard, attending to how Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip portray themselves, their nation, and their religion in *Beliefs of Friends* will give us a better understanding of the processes that helped to form modern social identities in Thailand.

There are six main sections to my thesis. The first is a basic biographical sketch of Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip, including other texts they have worked on. The second section places *Beliefs of Friends* in a larger historical context, looking at people before them

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8 As Thongchai Winichakul writes, “Colonialism was not only a political and economic project, but also a cultural and intellectual one that had induced drastic changes on local cultures across the globe.” Thongchai Winichakul, “The Quest for ‘Siwilai’,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (August 2000): 531. See also Michael Herzfeld, “The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-colonialism,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 899-926.
who have engaged in similar studies. The third section identifies how Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip fit into this lineage by looking at the concepts they are using to identify themselves and their work. The fourth section analyzes certain key terms that are critical for an understanding of *Beliefs of Friends*. The fifth section is a close reading of the text itself, examining how they put their language into use. The sixth and final section looks at later commentary on this book, examining how other readers have received and summarized its message.
I. Biography and Corpus

Beliefs of Friends, while part of larger religious sea-change taking place in Thailand, also needs to be understood simply as a work written by two men. This short biography of the two translators, then, also includes short descriptions of other texts they have written. Special attention will be given to one particular novel they translated, Kamanita, since it helped to provide the impetus for them to write the articles that became Beliefs of Friends.

Nakhaprathip, or Phra Saraprasert, lived from 1889 to 1945. From age eight to fifteen, he attended Suan Kulap School in Bangkok. While he was in school, he went to Wat Suthat and Wat Thepsirinthawarat to hear sermons with his father. When he graduated from school in 1904, he was ordained at Wat Thepsirinthawarat by Prince Wachirayan. Both Nakhaprathip and his father, at separate times, worked for the Prince-Patriarch as scribes. Nakhaprathip ended up working for him as his personal secretary, and Prince Wachirayan “consider[ed] [him]self to be [Nakhaprathip’s] patron.”

A highlight of his time at the wat was a trip to Sri Lanka in 1907 for a Tripitika Sangayana. At the age of 26 (1915) he received his full upasampada ordination, and then at 30 (1918), after 14 years in robes, he left the monastery, having studied up through the seventh level of Pali. Four years later, in 1922, he started a government job as an Anusatsanacan, or a satsana-teacher. Then in 1923, King Wachirawut asked Nakhaprathip to help him with Thai and Sanskrit vocabulary in the work he was writing, Mathanapatha. For this, he received the title Luang Turakitphithan. He received another name, Phra Saraprasert, in 1928 from King Prajadhipok, for whom he worked as a royal secretary. In the time he was working for the two kings, he and

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Sathiankoset were writing the articles which would become Beliefs of Friends. In 1932, he was transferred to the Ministry of Satsana, where he became the head of Satsana Studies. In the last few years of his life, he taught Pali at Chulalongkorn University and was on the committee for the Royal Thai Dictionary. He died in 1945 at the age of 56.10

Nakhaprathip wrote many works of his own, including some translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Thai, dictionaries, and a few pieces on Thai culture. These include Rattanawali, which is a translation of the Madhyamaka work, the Ratnavali, from Sanskrit into Thai; Nitisatakam, suphasit roibot, originally written in Sanskrit by Bhartrhari, which he also translated into Thai; various commentaries on Pali texts, including Dika chayamangkhon Atathok, Sampharawibak, a discussion in Thai of the lives of twenty-five Buddhas which appear in non-canonical Theravada texts; Pali-Sayam Aphithan, a Pali-Thai dictionary; Sap Khamen, a Thai-Khmer dictionary; Prawat phraratchatinnanam, a discussion of the history of conferred noble titles; Ruam nithan kho’ng Nakhaprathip, a collection of short stories in Thai; and Bot fu’k nisai, or “a lesson on practicing good behavior,” which he translated from English into Thai.

Sathiankoset, or Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, lived from 1888 to 1969. He was born to Chinese parents in Phranakhon in Bangkok. The only schooling he had was at Assumption College, a Catholic secondary school in Bangkok, which he attended from 1899 until 1904. In 1905, at the age of 17, he worked for a short time at the Oriental Hotel. From there, he became a clerk at the Ministry of Immigration for a Mr. Norman, who helped him improve his English. He eventually became the head secretary of the Advisory Board in the Ministry

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10 Bannanukrom ngan niphon kho’ng Phra Saraprasert (Tri Nakhaprathip) [Bibliography of Phra Saraprasert’s Work], in the series: Ekkasan wichakan Ho’samut haeng Chat; andap thi 3 (Krunthep: Ho’samut haeng Chat, Krom Sinlapakon, 1990), 1-2.
of Immigration. It was while he was there that he and Nakhaprathip began writing their religion articles. He was at the Ministry until 1932, when he suddenly found himself without work. At this point, he got a job in the Ministry of Arts. After that, he became an advisor to the Prime Minister.\(^\text{11}\) He continued on with this until 1942 when he left Prime Minister Phibun to return to be the head of the Ministry of Arts. He retired in 1948 at the age of 60, though he continued to write until he died in 1969 at 81.\(^\text{12}\)

Sathiankoset, the more prolific of the two, tended to focus his writing more on Thai literature and culture. These include *Thai Chin*, a comparative linguistic study of Chinese and Thai; *Mu’ang sawan lae Phisang thewada* deals with heaven and ghosts; *Prapheni nu’ang nai kankoet, lae Prapheni nu’ang nai kantai*, a study of birth and death customs and ceremonies in Thailand; *Wannakhadi thi naru, chabap sombun*, a collection of literature that Thai people should know; *Chiwit chao Thai samai kon*, or the life of Thai people in the past; *Rot wannakhadi*, a study of Thai literature and criticism; *Satsana priap-thiap*, which was published in a series on *satsana khwam chu’a* (satsana belief); *Ru’ang nana prathet*, stories from various countries; and *Nang Soraida*, a novel that he translated in 1915. In addition, he wrote *Chiwit lae ngan kho’ng Nakhaprathip*, a biography of his writing partner, and his own autobiography, *Fu’n Khwam Lang*.

Little is said of how Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip met, except that they “started publishing [together] when they were still in their tender youth.”\(^\text{13}\) As for their literary influences, one biographer says that Sathiankoset “is a writer who has opinions on literature

\(^{11}\) Unfortunately, I could not find a date for when he started in this position, so I cannot be sure who was in power.


\(^{13}\) *Bannanukrom ngan niphon kho’ng Anumanratchathon lae Saraprasert*, p. ɵ.
which tend strongly towards ‘Romanticism.’ When he collaborates with Nakhaprathip, who
is a writer who tends strongly towards ‘Classicism,’ they make literary works which both
men shape until they become completely parallel.” 14 They are not just identified as great
Thai writers, but great Thai writers whose works fit into modern classifications of literature.

Together, they produced a large corpus of work. In addition to Beliefs of Friends,
they wrote a number of books about Thailand and Thai culture. These include: Nana Niti, a
study of Thai proverbs; a multi-volume examination of the legends of gods and amulet cults
in Thailand, including Ganesh, Mekkhala and Rammisuan, called Thepniyai Songkhro;
Latthi Thamniam lae Prapheni Kho’ng Thai, which translates into English as “latthi of
custom and tradition of the Thai”; and a book called Latthi Satsana.

They have also translated many epics, novels, and short stories. In addition to their
translation of Kamanita from English into Thai (1930), 15 they have also written their own
version of the Ramakian and a dictionary of names and words used in the Ramakian, called
Somyaphithan Ramakian; the Hitopathet (1923), which is the Hitopadesa, translated from
Sanskrit into Thai; Arap Ratri (Arabian Nights); Kwanim: Phrabothisat haeng karuna
(translated from The Vision of Kwannon Sama by B. L. Broughton), an account of a previous
rebirth of Kwanim; Kamnoet Khon (The World’s Wonder Stories, later retitled The Wonder
World We Live In, by A. G. Whyte), a children’s book that discusses nature and religion;
Fonkhon Chaophraya (Phaulcon the adventurer, or The Europeans in the East: A Romantic
Biography by William Dalton); Niyai ek Kho’ng Pacha (The Pacha of many tales by Captain
Marryat); and Niyai Bengkhli (Bengali household tales).

English John E. Logie, trans. into Thai Sathirakoses and Nagapradipa (Krung Thep: Matichon, 1985).
15 Kamanita first appeared as a serial in the journal Thai Kasem 7, no. 5, and ran until volume 8, no. 4. They
published it as a whole in 1930.
To understand fully why they wrote *Beliefs of Friends*, one of the books that
Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip translated shortly after it must be taken into account. A large part of the inspiration for *Beliefs of Friends*, in fact, came from a Danish novel, *The Pilgrim Kamanita*. Sathiankoset read the English translation of Karl Gjellerup’s 1906 work and was fascinated. He described it to three people, including Nakhaprathip, who then asked him to translate it into Thai:

I told the story to Phra Saraprasert [Nakhaprathip], Luang Sansarakit, and ‘Dhanayawan.’ All three people asked for a translation, but I still couldn’t translate it because the book was about Indian literature and things of Mahayana Buddhism, about which we didn’t have much knowledge at that time. But it was a story that we had set our hearts on already, so we had to translate it….When we did the story *Beliefs of Friends* we got knowledge about things of the Mahayana and other knowledge along the way.

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16 Shortly before *Beliefs of Friends*, they also translated a version of the Ramakian (Ramayana), which they cite as a being a help in their translation of Kamanita. While they don’t cite it specifically, they had also worked on a translation of the Hitopadesa beforehand.


18 It is not clear why Sathiankoset immediately thought that this was Mahayana. Based on things that he and his fellow translator say about the Mahayana after the fact, though, some inferences can be made as to what he saw in this story. In a short introduction to the 2004 edition of Kamanita, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are quoted as saying that “[i]n the Mahayana, there usually are very strange stories about the Lord Buddha.” See Anuman Rajadhon and Nakhaprathip, introduction to *Kamanita*, by Karl Gjellerup (Krung Thep: Samnakphim Sayam, 2004). They discuss three stories which are illustrative of this bold statement: Khayphek, Say-Iw, and the Lankavatara Sutra. The first one that they describe is a Chinese story about the creation of a new heaven and earth; the second, another Chinese story more commonly known as *Journey to the West*, they describe as being about the Buddha and Ananda defeating the Monkey King who was invading the Jade Emperor’s heavenly palace; and the third is a sutra, reverential to the Buddha, which recounts an event when the he preaches as a favor to Thotsakan [Daśakantha, or Ravana]. They seem to be describing the first two in terms of heaven, focusing on the rather abnormal events which happen there. The Lankavatara Sutra is treated in a slightly different manner, in that they do not discuss what it is *about*, in terms of plot, only the manner in which it is written: with devotion. However, all three seem to be about things which take place in another realm, or have to do with non-human figures.

19 T: ru’ang kho’ng
20 T: khwam ru’ u’n u’n
21 Sathiankoset, “Chiwit lae ngan kho’ng ‘Nakhaprathip’,” 203. This passage was also referenced in the introduction to the 1961 *Kamanita*, except in a slightly different version: “When we did the story *Beliefs of Friends* we got knowledge about [khwam ru’ ru’ang] the Mahayana and other subjects [ru’ang u’n u’n] along the way.” See Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, trans., *Kamanita*, by Karl Gjellerup (Phranakhon: Phrae Phitthaya, 1961),
This, then, was a labor of love: love for the story. Sathiankoset read *Kamanita* as being a different Buddhism than the one he knew—it was located in India and described fantastic journeys into other worlds and heavens. It was *not* familiar, it was *not* Thai, it was *not quite right*. At the same time, though, he was still seeing something recognizable from the Buddha-Satsana. Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip end up categorizing this novel in a new way: same, but not the same.22

Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip seem to have gone into *Kamanita* with some notion, even if it was unspoken, of what was a part of the satsana of the Buddha. When they come face-to-face with *Kamanita* and are suddenly forced to either accept or reject it as being a part of the satsana, they seem to find themselves in a quandary. As literature, they accept it readily, but as the satsana, they are hesitant and become unsure as to what to do with it. This is where *Beliefs of Friends* comes into the picture. It became, in part, an exercise for them to become familiarized with what they called the Mahayana Buddha-Satsana that is in *Kamanita*.23

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22 This also brings to light assumptions about literature that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are making. For one thing, they seem to find no problems with the fact that they are taking what was written as a work of fiction and treating it as a religious text. However, a full discussion of that issue is beyond the scope of this thesis.

23 Incidentally, while *Kamanita*, the work which came out of *Beliefs of Friends*, becomes hugely popular, *Beliefs of Friends* itself never quite reaches the same lofty heights. However, in *Kamanita*’s literary fame, the vision of Buddhism, first developed in *Beliefs of Friends*, which they infused it with becomes frozen into the form of the novel. As the novel was reprinted over the years (and in many different forms, including school readers for children, a comic book, and in an electronic version online), this image of Buddhism has been disseminated throughout Thailand, reifying it perhaps even more than was possible in *Beliefs of Friends*. This is especially visible in the works of Suchip Punyanuphap (Suchiwo Phikkhu), who in his introductions to *Ko’ng Thap Tham* [The Dharma Army] and *Tai Rom Kasawaphat* [Under a Saffron Umbrella], credited the “Mahayana novel” *Kamanita* for inspiring him in his writing. A further study into the interactions of the genre of fiction and the development of religious thought in *Kamanita* would thus prove to be very fruitful. A short discussion of this tension can be found in Supha Sirimanon, “Kanprakat Lak Tham Duaiwithi Faengwai Nai Niyai” [Spreading the Foundation of the Dharma by Concealing It Within Fiction], in *Wannasan samnuk khwamsunnuk nai ithiphon su’san kho’ng nangsu’,* vol. 2 (Kothom.: Amarin Konphim, 1986), 3-13.
In terms of their literary corpus as a whole, then, *Beliefs of Friends* seems compatible with their other works. Both men seem deeply interested in exploring and understanding what it means to be Thai, what it means to be “religious,” and what it means to be a person who is learning in a modern global setting.
II. In the Past

The practice of talking about the Buddha-Satsana started changing under King Mongkut in ways that are still visible in many aspects of Thai culture, including Sathiankoset and Nakhapratthip’s writing. Mongkut’s reflections “on the relationship of Buddhist thought to both Christian and Western scientific thought [began] as a consequence of his extensive discussions with Christian missionaries.”\(^\text{24}\) In particular, he started subtly to change the meaning of satsana when it became paired with the English “Buddhism.” When doing this, he and other people around him used apologetics, rationalization, and a differentiation between the spiritual and the material to help redefine this word in a modern world that is influenced by Europe. This trend was then propagated by his sons, King Chulalongkorn, Prince Wachirayan, and King Wachirawut.

**Mongkut**

With the influx of European—specifically Christian—missionaries, it suddenly became important for followers of the satsana of the Buddha to band together to defend what the foreigners were calling the Siamese religion. To do this, King Mongkut helped to create “a Buddhism that was no longer simply a national tradition but rather a universal religion, which could compete with Christianity for the allegiance of intellectual Thai minds on very favorable terms”\(^\text{25}\) the Thammayut *nikai*. He hoped that the Thammayut “would be as strictly devout and progressive as he saw the missionaries being.”\(^\text{26}\) For the satsana to be an equal to these other religions, Mongkut created this new part of the Buddha-Satsana that he felt was easier to defend to Europeans who questioned it.

In codifying this competitive satsana, “Mongkut and his fellow modernists [also]
sought to identify true Buddhism with a certain rationalistic strain that they discerned within
the early Buddhist texts and—on that basis—to reconstitute the tradition so that it would not
be in conflict with the new ideas and institutions being absorbed from the West.” Within
the Thammayut, he urged for a “return’ to the supposedly authentic Vinaya tradition” which
would “eliminate[e] traditional Buddhist practices [which] obscured the fundamental
truths of the religion.” Mongkut and the modernists’ “skepticism” led them to a
“demystified” view of the world. Not only are they urging a return to a pure past, but they
are also claiming that this past has within it rational base that allows it to participate in
conversations with Christianity as an equal.

This changing conception of the Buddha-Satsana also allowed for a separation
between that which is spiritual and that which is secular. This change manifested itself in
many ways, including within the law: “The reformists, through their more rationalistic
interpretation of the Dhamma [the Buddha’s teachings and doctrines], self-consciously
undermined the credibility of the traditional cosmological and cosmogenic imagery. In so
doing, they undermined the credibility of the structures of existence that had been a
necessary and integral component of Buddhist secular law.” By rationalizing the dhamma,
reformists such as Mongkut made it impossible for the traditional laws for the laity—based

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25 David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform In Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (New
26 Ronald D. Renard, “The Monk, the Hmong, the Forest, the Cabbage, Fire and Water,” *Law and Society
27 Frank E. Reynolds, “Dhamma in Dispute: The Interactions of Religion and Law in Thailand,” *Law and
30 Ibid., 126.
on the teachings of the Buddha—to be taken seriously. This led to a need to distinguish between realms of existence—spiritual and secular. The secular world became something which could be analyzed and understood separately from the dhamma. No longer could there be such as a thing as a “Buddhist secular law”—instead it was Buddhist or secular.

This same attitude is visible in the writings of scholars close to Mongkut. In 1867, during the last year of Mongkut’s reign, Chaophraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnak), a minister in Mongkut’s court and one of the writers of the 1856 Bowring Treaty, wrote a book called Kitchanukit.\(^{32}\) In this work, Thiphakorawong summarizes and compares various religions, including Satsana Brahmin, Satsana Hindu, Satsana Lord Samanera Gotama the Lord Buddha, Satsana Lord Jesus Christ (which includes Latthi Roman Catholic, Latthi Christian [Protestants], and Latthi Mormon), and Satsana Nabi Mahamat. A few years after it was published, Henry Alabaster edited, rearranged, and summarized Thiphakorawong’s work in English.\(^{33}\)

In this discussion, Thiphakorawong goes on the offensive, particularly with respect to Christianity, and has heated imaginary discussions with various missionaries, asking and answering hypothetical questions. He defends Buddhism in the wake of their criticisms by questioning their own religions. By way of explanation, Thiphakorawong sums up his work by saying, “Such are the ideas and arguments of an honest and earnest Buddhist of the present day, defending his religion against the assaults of the numerous body [sic] of

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missionaries, who live in comfort, and teach without molestation among his countrymen.”\textsuperscript{34} He is out to prove to the disbelievers that Buddhism is not as bad as the missionaries are making it out to be.

As part of this mission, Thiphakorawong takes a very rational approach to writing this tract. Alabaster, the translator, praises Thiphakorawong by saying that he had a good working knowledge of “European science and of foreign religions,”\textsuperscript{35} and this allowed him to “endeavor to write fruitfully on various subjects, material knowledge and religion, discussing the evidence of the truth and falsity of things.”\textsuperscript{36} Thiphakorawong evaluated religions based on his scientific training—they were not things to be felt, but things to be analyzed. His rational mindset in writing \textit{Kitchanukit} allowed him to separate knowledge of material objects in a secular world from religious knowledge. Unlike Mongkut, who defended true Buddhism from false Buddhism, Thiphakorawong used this separation to defend Buddhism from non-Buddhist critics.

\textit{Chulalongkorn}

After King Mongkut died in 1868, his son, Chulalongkorn ascended the throne. Along with his half-brothers, including Prince Wachirayan, Chulalongkorn had received most of his schooling from English teachers whom he respected. In part due to this education, Buddhist apologetics under Chulalongkorn took on a new bent. Instead of a \textit{Kitchanukit}-style offense, Chulalongkorn looked to Mongkut’s more passive defense of Buddhism.\textsuperscript{37} By rationalizing Buddhism, they created a very marketable product which

\textsuperscript{34} Alabaster, “The Modern Buddhist,” 72-3.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{37} This had the added benefit of protecting the Thai nation from colonial powers. See Jory, 913-4; Renard, 658.
“received considerable respect from important sections of the Western scholarly community.”

To defend the Buddha-Satsana, they had to change it, making it palatable enough so that their Western attackers would no longer feel the need to attack.

As part of this defense, Chulalongkorn ordered a redaction of the Tripitika in 1893. In this version, though, they eliminated some common sections, like the Jataka Book, a collection of accounts of the Buddha’s previous lives, because they were “incompatible with the rationalism of Western scholars.”

Having been debunked by rational study, “the primary value of the Jatakas was [now just] as folk literature with historical use,” and not as true “stories of the Buddha’s former lives.” In fact, it became the popular consensus among Thai intellectuals that “many Jatakas must have been adopted from [a] previously existing body of [folk] tales and given a Buddhist ‘flavor’.”

The Jatakas, formerly one of the most popular parts of the Tripitika throughout Thailand, “were being judged according to a new conception of non-Buddhist history,” a conception of history in which they could not rationally be true—either in terms of history, or in terms of Buddhism.

This attitude that Chulalongkorn has towards Buddhism is also evident in an introductory essay he wrote to his 1904 Thai translation of thirty Jatakas. In it, he goes through and systematically analyzes and dissects the Jatakas into their component parts (the introduction, the body, and the verses), classifying them according to what was really spoken by the Buddha and what was an accretion from local folk tales. His conclusion—that very


39 Jory, “Thai and Western Buddhist Scholarship,” 909.

40 Ibid., 900.

41 Ibid., 897.

42 Ibid., 902.

43 Ibid., 896.
little of the Jatakas were really Buddhist—“in effect, omitted [the Jatakas] from the ‘orthodox’ Buddhism this scholarship was constructing.”

Chulalongkorn pulls many of his arguments very directly from T. W. Rhys Davids’s book *Buddhist India*. However, based on the advice of Prince Wachirayan, he never cites it directly to “avoid the risk of upsetting ‘the older generation’.” Even though he seems to be participating in the same sort of rationalism that is happening in Europe with respect to Buddhism, he and Wachirayan are presenting it to Thailand as *Thai* scholarship, a *Thai* way of thinking.

As a brother of Chulalongkorn and a member of the *sangha* (and later to become the Supreme Patriarch), Prince Wachirayan had a large amount of influence over the organization of the *sangha* and, along with Prince Damrong, the creation of a new educational system.

Wachirayan’s own experience in the *sangha* is illustrative of his attitude towards the Buddha-Satsana. When he ordained as a young man, he said of himself: “My knowledge and understanding at that time were typical of the modern Dhamma student who chooses to believe some things but not everything. He does not believe what he assumes to have been inserted by some shameless person.” For him, the Dhamma, like the Jatakas, is a human project and is prone to human errors. It has not necessarily come directly from the Buddha and there is not an inherent truth-quality to it.

To preserve the true Dhamma, and to prevent it from being corrupted further, he devised in 1894 a “new curriculum and a written examination” for the monastic Pali tests.

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44 Ibid., 905.
45 Ibid., 893.
While they never gained popularity, they have been retrospectively dubbed “ahead of their time” in terms of their rational approach to religious studies.\(^{47}\)

Wachirayan was also influential in drafting the 1902 Sangha Reform Act. Among other things, it “establish[ed] a Sangha hierarchy that…tie[d] the provincial monk-teachers to Bangkok.”\(^{48}\) No longer were monks able to control their own religious affairs, they now needed input from the state to be legitimated. Wachirayan explains this, saying, “To maintain the health of Buddhism, even to administer a single monastery, is difficult without the state’s support. The state scrutinizes constantly.”\(^{49}\) The monastic and lay students who were in these state-sponsored schools “emerged with a view of the world very different to that projected in traditional rituals and traditional religious education.”\(^{50}\) Enforcing a division between the spiritual part of Buddhism and the organizational and administrative aspects of it, Wachirayan believes, will help to strengthen the *dhamma* and prevent it from being further corrupted by “shameless people.”

Like Chulalongkorn, Wachirayan received his education as a child from various European tutors. Along with Prince Damrong, they were influential in creating a modern educational system in Thailand. This began in 1871 when Chulalongkorn issued a decree inviting Thai students to join the school in the Royal Pages’ Corps. While this was not unusual for a king to do, the “departure from tradition in this decree…was the complete absence of any reference to the traditional association of education with Buddhism and religious values.”\(^{51}\) Like Wachirayan and his work with the Sangha Reform Acts,


\(^{48}\) C. Reynolds, xli. See also Wyatt, 304.


\(^{50}\) Keyes, “Buddhist Politics,” 126.

Chulalongkorn is reinforcing a separation between religious and worldly knowledge. The monasteries should not be troubled by administrative problems—those should be left to the state.

Between 1899 and 1901, there was a large push to “generate popular enthusiasm for modern education.”\(^{52}\) To do this, Wachirayan developed a “strategy [that] was founded on the belief that monastery schools, however low their quality, had to form the starting point for the spread of modern education in the provinces.”\(^{53}\) While they may overlap, there are two distinct kinds of education that Wachirayan and Chulalongkorn are working with: modern secular education, and spiritual Buddhist education. This divide helps to relegate Buddhism further into the corrupted and mythological category.

Through his treatment of the Jatakas and *sangha* and educational reforms, King Chulalongkorn and his half-brother, Prince Wachirayan, continued King Mongkut’s project of making the satsana into a Buddha-Satsana.

**Wachirawut**

After Chulalongkorn died in 1910, his half-brother Wachirawut became king. His greatest contribution to this conversation about satsana was his popularization of the “threefold formula of Chat (nation), Satsana (religion), and Mahakesat (king or kingship) that has provided, from that time forward, the basic symbolic structure of Thai civic religion.”\(^{54}\) In this one phrase, he codified the apologetic, rationalistic, and spiritual/materialistic attitude of his predecessors: the Buddha-Satsana became an entity of equal validity and power as the

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 251.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 255.
\(^{54}\) F. Reynolds, “Dhamma in Dispute,” 442.
nation and the king, a well-defined category, and separated from material, administrative problems.

Wachirawut’s trinity helped to change many things about Thai society, especially the way that satsana exists as a category—what it includes, and what it doesn’t include. While originally it had been just identified with Buddhism, by the early 1930s, “the notion of Satsana was extended to include…other religions with a significant Thai constituency,”\textsuperscript{55} such as Islam.\textsuperscript{56}

However, this is not to say that satsana adopted a single new definition. Instead, as Frank Reynolds notes, “[t]he Satsana [had] been given a more exclusively Buddhist significance in some situations and a more ecumenical, pluralistic interpretation in others.”\textsuperscript{57} It was then left up to a new generation of Thai authors and scholars to work out how to understand the category of satsana in a modern world.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 442.
\textsuperscript{56} Renard, “The Monk, the Hmong, etc,” 660.
\textsuperscript{57} F. Reynolds, “Dhamma in Dispute,” 443.
III. Creating a New Self-Understanding

In Beliefs of Friends, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, like Mongkut, Chulalongkorn, Wachirayan, and Wachirawut, draw on many modern (European) academic sources. In doing this, though, they are presented with a new vision of their own lives and their own world, which they are then integrating into their intellectual self-understanding. They are allowing for a tremendous amount of input from others into how they define and see themselves.

The creation of an “ism”

Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip started to join into the growing conversation with European scholars about the definition of Buddhism as a religion. In doing this, they helped to reify the notion of a pan-Asian Buddhism with various latthi and nikai under its aegis. Philip Almond details this “ism”-creation, saying that a “crucial part of the process of the formation of Buddhism was the recognition that there were various culturally diffuse religious phenomena which had apparent relationships with each other.”58 This also introduces a new element of awareness: “The use of concepts like ‘Christianity’ [or ‘Buddhism’] implies a degree of self-consciousness that it is but one possible faith among competing ‘isms’.”59 A Buddhist is now a member of a world-wide category, in solidarity with, but not exactly the same as, other members of the group, and cordoned off from other members of competing “isms.” While Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip never translate “Buddha-Satsana” as “Buddhism” in their own writing, they do equate the two in the titles of

English books that they cite. In fact, their use of satsana with respect to certain “isms” shows that their conception of their friends as entities existing in an uneven history is changing how they see themselves.

However, this also raises the question as to whom, exactly, these “friends” are. Loosely speaking, they are including most of the world in the word “friend.” However, some friends seem to be more friendly than others—they spend over half of this book discussing the latthi of the Chinese, for instance. In doing this, they seem to be appealing to a national sameness in order to create friendships among linguistic, religious, and ethnic differences.

*Beliefs of Friends*, then, seems to be a series of glimpses into how Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip understood Buddhism to exist as a geographically diverse religion in relation to other popular, geographically diverse religions. In their struggles with the words surrounding this concept, they created new (good, bad, or even just different) friendships with European scholars engaging in the modern science of comparative religion, other Buddhists in the world outside of Thailand, and other people living in close geographic proximity to them, such as the Chinese.

*Modernity and the nation*

As Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip explore these ideas in their writing, they are dependant up on the concepts of “modernity” and “nation.” Both these words carry with them an entire entourage of meanings. To sort through these meanings, it will be helpful to look to Frederick Cooper and his discussion of colonialism. He explains the difficulties of defining colonial modernity: “The use by historians and others of the concept of colonial modernity flattens history, elevating messy histories into a consistent project and
underplaying the efforts of colonized people to deflect and appropriate elements of colonizing policies, taking apart the packaging that the critics of modernity leave intact.”

In order to drive this point home, he lays down a directive for scholars wishing to explore how to define such a concept:

[S]cholars should not try for a slightly better definition so that they can talk about modernity more clearly. They should instead listen to what is being said in the world. If modernity is what they hear, they should ask how it is being used and why; otherwise, shoehorning a political discourse into modern, antimodern, or postmodern discourses, or into “their” modernity or “ours,” is more distorting than revealing.

Listening needs to be not just an important part, but the central part of this discussion. The same can be said of understanding Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s discussion of satsana. They were trying to create a new identity for Buddhists in Thailand. They created Beliefs of Friends to be not only an intellectual exercise, but also to be a model for Thai people to live by. To do this, they invoke the practice of comparative religion, a burgeoning field in modern Europe that rationalizes religion.

However, in the service of listening to these translators and what they are actually trying to say, it is important to remember that the way they describe “comparative satsana” in this study is not necessarily the same as “comparative religion.” This is one of the peculiarities of modernity. Cooper describes this as being “the way in which non-Western peoples develop cultural forms that are not mere repetitions of tradition but bring their own perspectives to progress.”

This seems to be what is happening with Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip. They started with a borrowed category, but then infused it with their own perspective, and have moved the study of both satsana and religion forward in the process.

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60 Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 117.
61 Cooper, Colonialism in Question, 115.
62 Ibid., 114
Also presupposed in Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s entire discussion on religion and satsana is the modern European idea of “nation.” In a comment about Beliefs of Friends written almost 20 years after Sathiankoset died, an anonymous editor says:

Since [Sathiankoset] went to a Catholic school, he wanted to understand Christianity; since he mixed with Thai Muslims, he wanted to understand Islam; and since he had many Indian and Chinese friends, he wanted to have a glimpse of Hinduism, and Confucianism. The motive [for writing Beliefs of Friends] was to respect his friends’ religions.  

Even this anonymous reception of this book gives an idea of what messages readers are taking away. This comment is very overtly making a link between nation-state and religion. This is clearly visible in the book itself: India contains Latthi Hindu, Tibet contains Latthi Lama, and China contains Satsana-Confucius.

Furthermore, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip wrote the articles of Beliefs of Friends between 1925 and 1932—just as Thai democracy and the modern Thai nation-state are beginning. Their writing, then, is participating in the creation of a new kind of Thai nationalism. While they rely heavily on political borders, it is essential to remember that when they are invoking ideas of nation, they are not necessarily referring to a political nation. As Partha Chatterjee reminds us, “we have all taken the claims of nationalism to be a political movement much too literally and much too seriously.” Nationalism does not have to be about a “contest with the colonial power in the…material domain of the state.” This is quite apropos for Thailand, since there was no official colonial power in the Siamese state, as such. Instead, this allows us to put aside the question of Thailand’s political colonizati

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64 This topic is ripe with possibilities for further study. Unfortunately, the specific details of the interactions between political movements and this book are beyond the scope of this thesis.
66 Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments, 9.
and simply focus on how a different sort of Thai nationalism, a Thainess, was created from within. Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip help to give us a glimpse of that very creation as it is in the process of becoming.
IV. Key Terms

Having looked at the world outside of *Beliefs of Friends*, I will now examine the lexicon that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip use to discuss the category of satsana within the book itself. While they seem to be struggling with new meanings for many familiar words, the ones that I am focusing on are comparative satsana, satsana, latthi, and phu’an. By understanding the specifics of how they are speaking and the power they are infusing into these words, new contours of their writing can be illuminated. This discussion will help shed light on how they are relating themselves to European comparative religion, how they are treating the Buddha-Satsana, what it means to have a latthi, and whom they are referring to as “friends” in the title of the book.

*Translation and the Thai Novel*

To understand what it is that they are doing with these words, it is useful to look at the basic literary reasons for why they were having problems with these meanings in the first place. One very striking characteristic of *Beliefs of Friends* is that it is primarily made up of Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s translations of European scholars’ works. This book, then, has the feel of a collection of voices which have been arranged in a particular way and knitted together in order to present a certain message. They are allowing all of these voices into their own conversation on how Thai people should understand the world around them. Since the individual voices are mostly European, it seems that the translators are placing themselves into a modern scholastic lineage.
They are also participating in the emergence of the Thai novel as a literary genre.

While this book is not a novel, it was still formed in a similar way as novels were being written at the time. Smyth and Chitakasem describe the origins of this process:

> From 1894, there was a steady increase in the number of journals, magazines, and newspapers that appeared in Bangkok….Despite their limited circulation, these early journals provided Thais with their first exposure to Western literature, both in translation and adaptation….Lak witthaya [one such journal, literally “Stealing knowledge”]…was particularly significant for publishing, in serialized form, the first translation of an English novel, Marie Correlli’s best-seller, Vendetta [1900]. This was to have a profound effect on the Thai literary world, not only in terms of encouraging Thais to write stories in prose, but also in the actual use of the Thai language; Thai translated from English had, in the words of a contemporary observer, an “unusual flavor” which readers enjoyed and, which, in turn, influenced the style of aspiring authors.67

At the same time that novels were being published as serials in journals, most of the material in Beliefs of Friends was being published (between the years 1925 and 1932) as various essays in cremation volumes or in the journal Thai Kasem. These essays were first bound together in full book-form around 1940,68 and then reprinted in 1957 and 1971. Most of Beliefs of Friends contains the “unusual flavor” which arose from the large amount of translated material that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip used. Part of this flavor comes from their playing with meanings of words.

As part of this investigation, then, I will lay out definitions for the words in the title, Beliefs of Friends, (Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an). As Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip talk about what it is that their “friends” are doing, they also seem to be working with a set of connotations about these words that cannot be found in any dictionary. I will be exploring these connotations in this thesis as I examine how they present the latthi of friends.

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68 There are only indirect references to this 1940 binding in WorldCat. Bibliographical information was not available for it or the second edition.
“Comparative satsana”

*Beliefs of Friends* is a work in *satsana priap-thiap*, or comparative satsana. To understand the overall goals of this book and to know why it is that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip chose to write about religion in the way that they did, then, it will also be useful to examine what they mean when they speak of this comparative satsana.

First, I will examine this phrase’s English cousin: comparative religion. There have been many discussions about what comparative religion is since the science arose about 150-250 years ago in Europe. In 1922, a few years before Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip started writing the *Beliefs of Friends* articles, J. Estlin Carpenter in his book *Comparative Religion* summarizes the attitudes of three comparative religion scholars: Broughton (specifically in his 1745 *Dictionary of Religion*), Dr. Johnson, and an unnamed “learned Oxford scholar of the last generation.” Generally, all these men argued that there was the Christian world, and then there was the rest—and the rest was wrong. After touching briefly on this, Carpenter then passes a judgment on the underlying attitude that they embody: “These attitudes, it is now freely recognised, are not scientific.” In order to keep out prejudice, the scholar must participate in a modern scientific process in which “[p]articular products may be set side by side.” In fact, Louis Henry Jordan writes that the task of “the science of Comparative Religion….has been rendered tenfold more arduous and more critical by the vigorous propaganda of modern Christian Missions.” He is concerned that Christian missionaries will destroy the possibility of doing an accurate comparison, since the subject will have been contaminated by other sources. Both men talk of comparative religion as a

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70 Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, 25.
71 Ibid., 25.
science which captures the essences of various “products,” unsullied by outside influences, and holds them up side by side to see how they rank.

I look to Sathiankoset himself to help me understand some of the larger categories within comparative satsana in Thailand. In 1967, he published the first installment of his three-volume autobiography, *Fu’n Khwam Lang*. In this, he describes his early educational experiences at his secondary school, Assumption College, in Bangkok. There was one Catholic missionary, Brother Hilaire, who worked there creating a new Thai textbook. In describing Brother Hilaire, whom Sathiankoset seemed to admire greatly, he says:

Brother Hilaire had complete sincerity in his own feelings, thoughts and views about his steadfast beliefs. But even so, he would not show disrespect towards the feelings, thoughts, and views of other people, except for when he would assert that his things [beliefs] were good and so on, as a comparison to show something indirectly. Even if his listeners didn’t agree, he still wouldn’t argue aggressively. One time, for instance, he explained his views to Nakhapratthip, saying that he himself, although he could not proclaim himself [publicly] to be a devotee of the Buddha, was still a devotee of the Buddha privately because the Buddha-Satsana taught that one should do only things which are good and beautiful. He also tried to do these things all the time, and strongly believed that when he died, these good deeds would send him to heaven. Within the large group of people who believe in Buddha-Satsana, there are many people who do only good things. He, however, fared better than this group because he had a belief in God also. If God was real, he would have an advantage; if God was not real, he would break even—he would not lose out to people who believed that kamma was real.

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73 T: sacca khwam cing cay
74 T: khwam rusu’k nu’k hen
75 T: khwam chu’a thu’
76 T: kho’ng
77 T: khwam hen
78 T: phuttha-mamaka, P: Buddha-māmaka
79 T: yu nai tua
80 T: chu’a
81 T: kusan, Sanskrit: kuśala
82 T: sukhati, P: sugati
83 T: mu phuttha-satsanikachon, S: ’-Buddha-śasanika-jana
84 T: khwam chu’a
85 T: chu’a
This shows that Brother Hilaire also had a solid knowledge of comparative satsana.\textsuperscript{86} He knew about more than just his own group\textsuperscript{87} [and did not] have thoughts of the sort that would trample on other satsanas, unlike [other people’s thoughts] in the past which held only oppression. These existed in the books \textit{Mahakangwon}\textsuperscript{88} of the Roman Catholics (I understand that later the title was changed to \textit{Puccha})\textsuperscript{89}, and the book \textit{Trachu Thong}\textsuperscript{90} of the Protestants (I will discuss these books later). They were also born from narrow-minded people who required only that they could make other people have the same beliefs\textsuperscript{91} as them. They forgot to reflect on the principle\textsuperscript{92} which has been repeated many times: “Same but not the same.” All satsanas are likely to have foundational teachings\textsuperscript{93} which are the same and not the same. Even within the same satsana it will be like this. If one doesn’t know the origin [of a teaching which is] “Same but not the same”—it exists because of what? and, how did it develop up until the present?—one should not criticize it. Be satisfied up to this point and be happy. If you know this, the discussion of what is “them” and what is “us,” what is “satsana” and what is not “satsana”—and what is only “latthi”—will simply not arise.\textsuperscript{94}

Even though Sathiankoset wrote this passage about thirty-five years after he worked on \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, and, no doubt, many of his views changed over that time, it can still provide an entrée into his way of categorizing the world. His own memories about his old school days can be used as a guide to his past. By using \textit{Fu’n Khwam Lang} as a commentary on \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, I will explore in greater depth what it means to do comparative satsana.

To understand what it means for Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphit to do what they call comparative satsana in \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, their methodology and the sources that they are drawing from must be taken into account. They are engaging in a peculiar sort of scholarship similar to these modern academic conversations. In fact, they cite, translate, or use wholesale many European works. Sathiankoset even comments: “It is strange that I happen to know

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{86} T: satsana priap-thiap \\
  \item \textsuperscript{87} T: fay \\
  \item \textsuperscript{88} \textit{The Great Anxiety} \\
  \item \textsuperscript{89} \textit{Queries} \\
  \item \textsuperscript{90} \textit{Golden Scales} \\
  \item \textsuperscript{91} T: khwam chu’a \\
  \item \textsuperscript{92} T: lak \\
  \item \textsuperscript{93} T: lak tham, S: °-dharma \\
\end{itemize}
more about foreign cultures than our own culture, from accounts written by foreigners.”

They are not living in an isolated community, unaware of the world around them. Instead, as they embark upon their study of comparative satsana in *Beliefs of Friends*, they frequently look to others who have gone in a similar direction before them.

Among their sources, the most prominent is *The Vision of Kwannon Sama* by B. L. Broughton, which is the original work they translated in the lengthy section entitled “Kwanim: The Bodhisattva of Compassion.” They cite many other works, often not even transliterating foreign titles into the Thai script, but simply leaving them in their original Romanized form. These sources include:*  
96 Sir Charles Elliot’s *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch;*  
97 Sir Monier Monier-Williams’ *Buddhism;*  
98 I-Tsing’s and J. Takakusu’s *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago;*  
99 J. H. C. Kern’s *Manual of Indian Buddhism;*  
100 R. Spence Hardy’s *Eastern Monarchism;*  
101 T. W. Rhys Davids’s *Buddhism: Its History and Literature* and *Pali-English Dictionary;*  
102 Sir M. Monier-Williams’ *Sanskrit-English Dictionary;*  
103 J. N. Farquhar’s *A Primer of Hinduism;*  
104 various ideas from Hofrath Buhler, a scholar of Jain history;  
105 L. A. Waddell’s *The

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96 I have taken the liberty to correct spelling errors and expand on their given book titles.
97 *Beliefs of Friends*, 184.
98 *Beliefs of Friends*, 185.
99 *Beliefs of Friends*, 188.
100 *Beliefs of Friends*, 193.
101 *Beliefs of Friends*, 194.
102 *Beliefs of Friends*, 204.
103 *Beliefs of Friends*, 814.
104 *Beliefs of Friends*, 814.
106 *Beliefs of Friends*, 58.
Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism; Samuel Beal’s Buddhist Literature in China; Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Truth and Tradition of Chinese Buddhism; Joseph Edkins’ Chinese Buddhism; H. A. Giles’ Chinese English Dictionary and Religions of Ancient China; Alice Getty’s The Gods of Northern Buddhism; and J. G. R. Forlong’s Encyclopedia of Religions or Faiths of Man. They frequently do not cite pages from these texts, or even specify which of their ideas came from which source. For instance, at the end of the section on the Eighteen Arahants, they implore the reader:

[If] you require proof [of] the accounts which are explained in this section, please see the books: The Eighteen Lohan of Chinese Buddhist Temples by T. Watters. Les Seize Arhat Protecteurs de la Roi by Sylvain Lévi and Ed. Chavannes (Journal Asiatique, July-August 1916). The Arhats in China and Japan by M. W. de Visser (Ostasiatische Zeitschrift [sic] 1917-1919). P. Doré’s Researches into Chinese Beliefs of Friends, 259. “The present volume provides wealth of information on the Buddhism of Tibet or ‘Lamaism’ as it has been called, after its priests, as well as later Indian developments of Buddhism. The author defines with clarity the theistic development of Lamaism from the earlier doctrines of the Buddhist faith, and refers especially to the details of sects, shrines, discipline, superstition and customs. A pioneering work which penetrates the frigid reserve and jealously guarded mysteries of the Tibetan Buddhist Priests or ‘Lamas.’” See L. Austine Waddell, The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism (1895; repr., New Delhi: Aryan, 1996), jacket information.


Beliefs of Friends, 403. The development of Chinese Buddhism, “Masses for the Dead,” Pure Land, the Buddhist Pantheon, literature, pilgrimage, and Present-Day Buddhism.

Beliefs of Friends, 490. This includes a chronology of Sakyamuni reaching from previous Buddhas through his birth in the Sakyas, his teachings, stories of Rahula and Ananda, the Buddha’s travels to China, discussions of gods and heavens, the Buddha’s death and relics, the First Council, the first Patriarchs, dates and specific details regarding how Buddhism came to China, schools of Chinese Buddhism, Buddhist morality, Buddhist holidays, Hindu mythology and Buddhism, the Buddhist cosmology, images, monasteries, ceremonies, literature (including references to Burnouf and Beal), translations of some sutras and sastras, feng-shui, a comparison between Buddhist phraseology and Christian teachings, Taoism, and a discussion on the use of Sanskrit. See Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003).

Beliefs of Friends, 816. Giles helped create the Wade-Giles system for Romanizing Chinese.


Beliefs of Friends, 486.

Beliefs of Friends, 497. A three-volume work.
They do also cite a few non-European sources, such as *The Mahavamsa*, and “...the [historical] images, which are the foundation of Wat Mangkon Kamalawat.”

Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, however, do not seem to be operating within this same set of continent-specific genres. For example, in 1908, a little less than twenty years before they began writing the articles that would make up *Beliefs of Friends*, the government of Ceylon asked Rhys Davids to help edit a new edition of the *Mahavamsa*, which he then “entrusted to one competent critical scholar,” a German man, Wilhelm Geiger. While Geiger’s may not necessarily be the version that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip were working from, they are still referencing it as a scholastic work, full of “information.” It is important to recognize that just because something *looks like* a “traditional chronicle” does not mean that it *is read like* a “traditional chronicle.” In this case, it is possible that they are treating the *Mahavamsa* as a European source simply because it is being used and handled by so many “competent critical scholar[s]” in Europe. They are not invoking the *Mahavamsa* in order to place themselves in it or see themselves as playing a part in it. Instead, they are mentioning it

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115 Also referenced in *Beliefs of Friends*, 424.
116 *Beliefs of Friends*, 741.
117 *Beliefs of Friends*, 208.
118 T: khau
119 T: lak
120 *Beliefs of Friends*, 740.
122 Benedict Anderson describes two different ways to experience the passage of time in *Imagined Communities*. The first (older) way is a conception of “simultaneous time”—when the past is existing simultaneously with the present (like medieval images of Jesus who looks like a European). The second (modern) way is to live in an “empty, homogeneous time,” in which events can be related only by their coincident temporal proximity, in the same way that the events on the front page of a newspaper are related only by the day that they occurred. Anderson also says of the novel that “nothing better shows the immersion of the novel in homogeneous, empty time than the absence of those prefatory genealogies, often ascending to the origin of man, which are so characteristic a feature of ancient chronicles” (26n39). However, while Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are invoking such an “ancient chronicle” (the *Mahavamsa*), they do not seem to be treating it, as Anderson predicts,
more as a reference book, a place that any reader can look to find more facts. Based on the
texts that they draw on and cite in their book, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are quite aware
of and respectful of modern scientific religious scholarship.\footnote{Nor are they alone in this conversation outside of Europe. At this same time (1928), Anagarika Dharmapala wrote two small articles, posthumously combined into a single article entitled “What is Buddhism?” He answers the question he posed in the title by using very specific language: “Buddhism is the English name for \textit{the great Religion} of Ancient India known as the Buddhhasasana….[The Lord Buddha] was the first to preach against cruelty to animals….against the manufacture of destructive weapons, against slavery, against alcoholism….He was the first to teach the principles of Evolution….of Psychic relativity….of the foolishness of relying on others to go to heaven….\cite{Dharmapala1928} [He taught] the ethic of spiritualized democracy….in a country where sensible people dwell. The Lord Buddha was a \textit{scientist} full of compassion for all.” See Anagarika Dharmapala, “What is Buddhism?” in \textit{Return to Righteousness}, ed. Ananda Guruge (Ceylon: The Government Press, 1965), 77-78, emphasis mine. Not only does this align “Buddhism” with other “isms” by referring to it as “the great Religion,” the foremost among many, but he even overtly calls the Buddha a scientist, giving examples of scientific discoveries that the Buddha has made. This helps to clarify what it means to be looking at the Buddha-Satsana in a modern scientific way.}

In the same vein, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip take up a typical modern scholastic
voice, in which the author all but fades pronominally into the ink. Neither man has a very
visible presence in their discussion. They use very few pronouns, such as “we,” “they,” or
“our.” Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s own silent voices coupled with their vocal sources
help to place \textit{Beliefs of Friends} more firmly into a modern academic conversation.

However, while they are superficially appealing to this modern method of
comparative religion as a science, they are not fully participating in it when they do
comparative satsana. Instead, they seem to be using Brother Hilaire as a model for their
studies. They were impressed by his “same but not the same” model, in which all religions
can converge and coexist peacefully in a single place. While they still valorize the Hinayana,
they do not push for conversion for the non-Hinayana. Indeed, they try to distance
themselves from certain European religious books which “were…born from narrow-minded

\textit{as an element in (older) simultaneous time, but instead as a part of modern academics. See also Benedict Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2003), 22-4. For a response to Anderson’s conception of homogeneous time, see Partha Chatterjee, “The Nation in Heterogeneous Time,” \textit{Futures} 37, no. 9 (November 2005): 925-942.}
people who required only that they could make other people have the same beliefs\textsuperscript{124} as them.\textsuperscript{125} In the passage above, Brother Hilaire describes a very gentle way of approaching comparative satsana. He does not \textit{want} to distinguish a “them” from an “us,” which would set apart large chunks of the world. As Sathiankoset explains, if a person can understand the concept of “same but not the same,” then “the discussion of what is ‘them’ and what is ‘us,’ what is ‘satsana’ and what is not ‘satsana’—and what is only ‘latthi’—will simply not arise.”\textsuperscript{126} He acknowledges that there are in fact differences between people’s beliefs, but is not interested in judging these differences.

It is this acceptance which allows Brother Hilaire, when in conversation with Nakhaprathip, to self-identify as a \textit{phuttha-mamaka},\textsuperscript{127} a devotee of the Buddha, or “a person who proclaims him or herself to be a person who believes\textsuperscript{128} in the Buddha-Satsana.”\textsuperscript{129} Even while doing this, though, he still professes his devotion to God.\textsuperscript{130} This multi-faceted way of existing within the world inspires Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip to emulate Brother Hilaire’s comparative satsana. In this statement, the disparity between comparative satsana, an empathetic understanding of others, and comparative religion, a scientific comparison between others, becomes all the more obvious. The English-language phrase “comparative

\textsuperscript{124} T: khwam chu’a
\textsuperscript{125} Sathiankoset, \textit{Fu’n Khwam Lang} [Looking Back], vol. 1 (Phranakhon: Siwaphon, 1967), 357.
\textsuperscript{126} Sathiankoset, \textit{Fu’n Khwam Lang}, vol. 1, 357.
\textsuperscript{127} There is, of course, a question as to whether Brother Hilaire himself used \textit{phuttha-mamaka} (P: Buddha-mâmaka), whether Nakhaprathip used it when relating the story to Sathiankoset, or whether only Sathiankoset used it as he wrote this. But no matter who chose to use it, it is an unusual choice. T: sawok (P: sâvaka) is the much more common term for referring to a lay devotee or disciple. Also, \textit{mamaka} generally only appears in Thai in compound with \textit{phuttha} (referring to a disciple of the satsana), while sawok is a broader term for any devotee of a satsana.
\textsuperscript{128} T: nap thu’
\textsuperscript{130} In fact, Sathiankoset presents comparative satsana as being something akin to creating a post-mortem insurance policy: like Pascal’s wager, no matter what happens in the end, Brother Hilaire will still be covered.
religion” does not quite map onto this concept, since, in theory, comparative satsana incorporates a strong personal understanding—an internalization—of others.

This is not to say that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip completely abandon the idea of comparative satsana as being a science. Instead, they are appealing to the scientific and modern comparative religion framework, and then making a very different statement with it: to do comparative satsana, one needs to appreciate both that there are other satsanas, and that their message is worth trying to understand.

The main point of the book, then, is not necessarily to engage with Europe or European scholars in a meaningful way. They’re writing in Thai, and mainly about things with which Thai people would really be interacting. They are participating in the creation of a Buddhism, which is one of the many “great religions.” It can now join other “isms” from around the globe in a dialogue, in a convergence of ideas. However, in this creation, they are introducing an inherent inequality between what is called latthi and what is called satsana. Their definitions of these concepts change minutely, but perceptibly, over the course of the book (perhaps illustrating changes in their thoughts from article to article). It is incumbent upon the reader to stay flexible as the authors struggle with new definitions for these familiar words.

131 Gustaaf Houtman describes this same phenomenon of meaning disparity between translations of a word in his 1997 article, which compares U Ba Khin’s biography to a Western secular-literary biography: “Although this [biography] would hardly qualify as a biography from the Western secular-literary point of view, such designation is quite acceptable from a Burmese Buddhist-literary perspective.” Often things exist with similar names, but very different referents. See Gustaaf Houtman, “The Biography of Modern Burmese Buddhist Meditation Master U Ba Khin: Life before the Cradle and past the Grave,” in Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia, edited by Juliane Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 312.
“Beliefs”

This convergence can even be seen in the title of this book, *Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an*, or *Beliefs of Friends*. Latthi,\(^{132}\) the first word, can be translated into English as “doctrine, belief, creed, practice, ‘-ism’.”\(^{133}\) It is usually used for religious or political beliefs or attitudes,\(^ {134}\) such as communism, terrorism, democracy, or the practice of Brahmanical magical practices.\(^ {135}\) In English, latthi falls short of being translated as a full religion, as it is generally just seen as “an opinion.”\(^ {136}\) Furthermore, a latthi can be paired and contrasted with a satsana, as Sathiankoset does in *Fu’n Khwam Lang*. A satsana, on the other hand, can be defined as “a faith\(^ {137}\) of people which has a foundation\(^ {138}\) and which describes the origin and ending of the world, etc.”\(^ {139}\); or, in other words, the category of religion.

In this hierarchical definition set, a key word in distinguishing between the two is lak, or “foundation,” which refers to a solid base or a pillar (both literal and metaphoric). One of the main differences between latthi and satsana in Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s usage of them seems to be that a satsana has this solid foundation, while a latthi does not. Interestingly, in terms of usage, while satsana has entered into common spoken Thai, latthi is of a slightly more formal register, and does not get used as frequently (though it is certainly not an obscure or unknown word; in English, it would be like using the word “aspire” instead

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\(^{132}\) Since there is such a clear division between satsana and latthi, I will not translate either word in an attempt to retain the spirit of the division. However, I will be using “religion” as very generic term in order to refer collectively to what they divide into satsana and latthi (along with other sorts of beliefs, such as khwam nap thu’, or khwaam chu’a).


\(^{134}\) For a discussion of the history of the word “belief” in English, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Belief and History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985).

\(^{135}\) *Thai-English Student’s Dictionary*, s.v. “latthi.”


\(^{137}\) T: khwam chu’a thu’

\(^{138}\) T: lak

\(^{139}\) *Photchanukrom chabap Ratchabandittyasathan, Pho. So. 2525*, s.v. “satsana.”
of “hope”). Examples of satsanas as defined in current Thai dictionaries include Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This modern categoric usage hearkens back to the way that Thiphakorawong applied satsana to all the religions in his book, *Kitchanukit*.

However, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip do not use satsana in such a liberal way to refer to a category containing so many “isms.” In fact, among those three, they only call Buddhism a satsana, the other two being latthis. Instead, they start to use a new set of qualifiers to distinguish between the two. In the introduction to the 1927 edition of the first section of *Beliefs of Friends*, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip define latthi and satsana in this way:

One explanation: this world has a creator, people can receive good or bad results, and yet it is the creator who produces [these results]: this is called latthi (“Theology”); another explanation: all sorts of things arise dependant on only a cause, people can receive good or bad results, and yet it is causes which produce [these results]: this is called satsana (“Religion”).

In this passage, they say that a latthi is based on the actions of a creator, while a satsana is based on impersonal causes. While it is difficult to notice in translation, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip themselves chose to use the English words “Theology” and “Religion” to translate latthi and satsana. While “religion” is a very common way to translate satsana in modern Thai, “theology” is rather unheard of for latthi. Instead of distinguishing between latthi and satsana solely on a hierarchical scale of truth, they are separating them based on the

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140 *Thai-English Student’s Dictionary*, s.v. “satsana.”
141 T: phu sang. In the context, this word can actually be taken in either the singular or plural.
142 T: koet tae hetu, P: ’hetu
143 T, P: hetu
144 *Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an Phak 1*, 1927, pp. ค-ฆ.
145 While this is an extremely important detail to note, I am not going to continue to refer to “latthi” as “theology.” The main reason for this is that they wrote this passage in the introduction to an early version of their article which turns into Section One of the book, which talks about Latthi Christ, Latthi Jew, Latthi Islam, and Latthi Zoroaster. It does make sense to be calling these latthis theologies here. However, since this particular introduction was never reprinted in bound forms of the book or in introductions to other sections, I cannot be sure if they meant this one translation of the words to hold true for all sections or just that one. Instead, I will be using the word “belief” to translate latthi when necessary (as in the title of the book).
presence of a creator. By turning the theists’ own vocabulary against them, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip develop this subtle critique. In this one passage, God has deteriorated from being the one true creator, to being only a belief in the minds of some. Then, by emphasizing the fact that the true Buddha-Satsana is only about the workings of an impersonal kamma, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip can argue that the Mahayana became corrupted when it came into contact with local—theistic—latthis.

Furthermore, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip often write about latthi satsana, which in English could be broken apart as “latthi based on satsana” (in the same way, latthi kommunit is a “belief based on Communist ideals”). This is not the “ism” meaning of latthi which they had been using in Lattthi Jew and Latthi Brahmin. Instead, this is getting more directly at the “belief” meaning: “a belief based on religion,” or “a (true) religious belief,” to put it roughly in English.146 When pairing these two words together, then, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are invoking a different meaning of latthi: one which does not carry the pejorative connotation, but instead is based on the lak of the satsana. Together they simply function as a larger “religion” category.

146 Throughout this thesis, I refer to this concept simply as latthi-satsana, without translating it.
The Pali Problem

One other way of enriching our understanding of these two words is to look at their etymologies. Both latthi and satsana are from Pali words: laddhi and sāsana. Both Pali words have similar, but not exactly the same, meanings as their Thai derivates. Gustaaf Houtman discusses a similar phenomenon in Burmese in his article “How a Foreigner Invented ‘Buddendom’ in Burmese.” In it, he discusses tha-tha-na and bok-da’ ba-tha, Burmese words which have come from the Pali words, sāsana and buddha-bhāsā. He argues that discussing the Pali root of a word will not necessarily help to create a better understanding for how that word is currently being used in a certain spoken language; this, he calls the “Pali trap.”147 In the same way, many Americans do not know the roots of most English words, and therefore knowing that “university” comes from the Latin for “the whole” will not help a non-English speaking person understand how it is currently being used in Standard American English. It is fruitless to discuss the Pali meanings of the words if no one in Thailand knows them or uses them.

On the other hand, Peter Jackson, when talking about the pre-Christian vocabulary of belief, argues that, while often anachronistic, an etymological examination can be useful. This is particularly true when looking at a single word being invoked in many different languages with what seems to be its original meaning, but, in fact, it has undergone subtle transformations.148 For instance, a New England Congregational church building does not generally look the same as an English Episcopal church building, even though both can be called a Protestant church. In this case, a good way to understand how the two referents of

this single word can be so different is to examine what the word “church” originally meant that it could be used in such a way. In the same way, the Pali origins of these Thai words can help to create a larger understanding of these Buddhist concepts which stretch to places beyond Thailand.

This discussion draws from both Houtman and Jackson. For while most of this thesis deals with latthi and satsana as they are actively being used by Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip as tattasmas (loanwords) in Thai, it is also useful to reference the Pali origins of these words. As technical Theravada terms, they have also become tattasmas in the lexicons of many other Theravada languages. Both words started off with specific meanings in Pali that will be useful to keep in mind as a baseline.

Laddhi, the Pali origin of latthi, is a “religious belief, view, theory, [especially a] heretical view.” Like latthi, it means “a belief or view,” but carries a more negative connotation: it’s generally a wrong religious view. In Thai, however, latthi can refer to any system of thought (not just religion), and it doesn’t necessarily have to be wrong (being contrasted to the correct view)—for example, democracy and terrorism are both latthis. Even when it is referring to a religion, such as Latthi Brahmin, it does not necessarily have a “heretical” label attached to it. The Thai latthi does not refer to a deviation from a norm as laddhi does in Pali.

Both laddhi and latthi are less common words in both languages. In Pali, laddhi only supplants the much more common ditthi (unfounded opinion) in later texts. In Thai, nikai tends to be used as, if not more, frequently than latthi to refer to a belief system. However,

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150 Pali-English Dictionary, s.v. “laddhi.”
also coming from the Pali word *nikaya*, it does not have the same negative connotation that latthi has.

*Sāsana*, in Pali, can refer either to a teaching in general, or specifically to the worldly manifestation of the teachings of the Buddha.\(^{151}\) This specific *sāsana* is visible in the *dhamma*, the *sangha*, relics, and texts. One very famous Pali verse describes it in this way: “The non-doing of all evil, the attainment of the good, the purification of one’s own mind; this is the *sāsana* of the Buddhas.”\(^{152}\) This *sāsana*, or teaching to be practiced, involves individual agents acting (or refrain from acting, as the case may be) in the world. Here, *sāsana* is not acting like a “religion.” While the *sāsana* is visible in the elements that are traditionally used to define a religion (people, books, things), it is not defined by these elements.

In looking at the origins of both these terms, it is possible to see how flexible the meanings are. While these Pali meanings may not be in current use in spoken Thai, they are helpful in that they show how and why the Thai *tatsamas* have the force that they do. While both latthi and satsana are capable of translating the category of “religion,” they also have important, and distinct, secondary meanings in Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip’s writing. Thai term satsana still retains overtones of Buddhas’ *sāsana*, and thus can be used to describe a true belief. Latthi, on the other hand, is a less common word for an unfounded opinion about a system of thought which does not necessarily have to be about something true. The Pali origins of these two words help to bring out an implied hierarchy between these two: even the strangest satsana is still somehow more real or valid than a latthi.

\(^{151}\) Pali-English Dictionary, s.v. “sāsana.”
Other writers in the past

This sharp divide and hierarchy between latthi and satsana has not always been a part of the Thai language. Within Kitchanukit, the book written about religion by Thiphakorawong and under the auspices of King Mongkut, satsana was used as a much broader term, like that of the Pali “teaching to be practiced.” Authors were writing satsana books,153 there are gods—including the Thai god, the Brahmin god, and the Indian154 god, within many satsanas;155 a person could “teach a wrong satsana”156 or “believe157 a satsana which is not true.”158 Satsanas usually were attached to a person: Satsana Lord Samanera Gotama the Lord Buddha, Satsana Lord Jesus Christ, and Satsana Nabi Mahamat.159 Further reinforcing the Pali origins of this word, the author switches frequently between the more common (Sanskrit-derived) spelling of satsana, ศาสนาน, and the equally correct but much less common Pali spelling, สาสนา. While there seems to be no change in meaning with this switch, Thiphakorawong is clearly aware of the root form of sāsana.

Latthi, however, was used more to describe the ideas, the teachings, contained within the religion (satsana). For instance, when Thiphakorawong was talking about Satsana Nabi Mahamat, he says there are some people who have “old latthi,”160 implying that there is a division between the old and the new, and that these latthi can age. They are not eternal.

Latthi can also be used to describe a sect or denomination. In his discussion on Christianity,

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154 T: khaek
155 Thiphakorawong, Kitchanukit, 88.
156 Ibid., 88.
157 T: thu'
158 Thiphakorawong, Kitchanukit, 83.
159 Keeping a close eye to detail, Thiphakorawong only refers to these teachers by their full titles, in the way that they are used by followers of the teaching. This implies that there was some contact between him (or the court) and Muslims and Christians—these dialogues that he is writing about were not completely invented.
160 Thiphakorawong, Kitchanukit, 101.
Thiphakorawong refers to “Latthi Roman Catholic, Latthi Christian [Protestant], [and] Latthi Mormon”\(^{161}\) as being the three main denominations of Satsana Lord Jesus Christ. While theologically the three may not normally be grouped like this, it is true that all three are based on the teachings (satsana) of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way, there is not only a hierarchy between satsana and latthi, but there is also a fundamental difference in kind: a latthi is a subset of a satsana.

Approximately twenty years later, Prince Wachirayan, another developer of modern Thai Buddhism, wrote his autobiography discussing his introduction to the Buddha-Satsana. However, since it deals almost exclusively with his life within the *sangha*, there is very little talk of any other religion, and thus little call for such a use of satsana or latthi. On one page, though, he does the same phrase twice: “to be a foundation\(^{162}\) in the Phra Satsana.”\(^{163}\) He does not mention the Lord Buddha; it is simply understood that “satsana” with the royal/religious honorific in front of it is referring to the satsana of the Buddha. In his translation of these passages, Craig Reynolds translates these two instances as “ground themselves firmly in the Buddha’s teachings [Phra Satsana]”\(^{164}\) and “to be pillars of Buddhism [Phra Satsana].”\(^{165}\) Both of these meanings—one specific, and one categorical—are possible from Wachirayan’s one phrase.

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\(^{161}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^{162}\) T. lak

\(^{163}\) Damrongrachanuphap, *Phraratchaprawat Ratchakan Thi Ha Kon Sawoey Rat; Phrabowonratchaprawat; Phraprawat Krom Phraya Thewavongwaropakan; Phraprawat Trat Lao* [History of the Fifth Reign Before Ruling; The Distinguished Royal History; History of Krom Phraya Thewawongwaropakan; History Telling the Story]. (1882; repr., Bangkok: Ongkan Kha kho’ng Khurusapha, 1961), 237.

\(^{164}\) C. Reynolds, introduction to *Autobiography*, 45.

\(^{165}\) Ibid., 46.
“Friends”

This search for definitions now returns to the final word of the title of the book, *Beliefs of Friends*. The Thai term Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip use for “friends,” phu’an, is a very common one. In fact, unlike latthi, phu’an is not from Sanskrit or Pali. It is a word that people, either young Thai children or foreigners, learn early on. Very literally, “friend” implies an artificial relationship which is created between two people. Unlike most familial ties, this relationship is tenuous in its existence and can be ended at any time, by either party. It is a relationship based on common likes and dislikes, or a coincidence of physical or temporal location. Friends are close, but not necessarily intimate.

However, in Thai, phu’an can also be used in a larger, less technical way, similar to a collective pronoun: “we-all.” While retaining some of the force of a created relationship, it also carries a secondary definition of “people who are in the same situation” in phrases like *phu’an manut* (a fellow human) or *phu’an ruam chat* (a fellow citizen). As such, while in Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip’s writing phu’an may still silently carry with it some of the connotations of the relationship of a friend, I will be treating it in a similar fashion as Wilfred Cantwell Smith treats his concept of we-all. He discusses a development of the relationship between Western scholarship and religion in this way:

The traditional form of Western scholarship in the study of other men’s religion was [at first] that of an impersonal presentation of an ‘it.’ The first great innovation in recent times has been the personalization of the faiths observed, so that one finds a discussion of a ‘they.’ Presently the observer becomes personally involved, so that the situation is one of a ‘we’ talking about a ‘they.’ The next step is a dialogue, where ‘we’ talk to ‘you.’ If there is listening and mutuality, this may become that ‘we’ talk with ‘you.’ The culmination of this progress is when ‘we all’ are talking with each other about ‘us.’

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He summarizes this transition in the following shorthand: “impersonal/it, impersonal/they, we/they, we/you, we-both, or we-all.” Smith clarifies his “we-all,” perhaps the most extreme relationship pattern, and therefore the most difficult to imagine, by saying that “we—all of us—live together in a world in which not they, not you, but some of us are Muslims, some are Hindus, some are Jews, and some are Christians.” Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip seem to be using phu’an in a way similar to Smith’s we-all: they are becoming personally involved and bringing other people closer into their world—and entering more into the world of others. When they speak of their Chinese phu’an, then, they are really talking about “those of us who are Chinese.” This use of the word phu’an helps to give a person-ality to the people living around them. Even though these phu’an are people who are only known in a distant collective, they are still respected. Even within this we-all, though, the word “friend” implies an “other”—my friend is not myself. We-all have much in common—but not everything.

In the introduction to *Beliefs of Friends*, an anonymous commentator writes that it is hoped that this book will inspire the reader to “go converse with friends who have different latthi and different satsana, by holding to the principle of respecting the beliefs of that person.” We-all do not have to hold the same beliefs or have the same religion. It is important to respect your friends who have a different religion and not mistreat or offend

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168 Ibid., 58, emphasis in original.
169 Ibid., 57.
170 T: sonthana, P: samsandana
171 T: yu’t lak
172 T: khwam chu’a
173 *Beliefs of Friends*, vi.
them, since they are not just theoretical entities. These friends exist in a reality that extends beyond the covers of the book.

*All together*

Connecting together the beliefs and the friends is the word *kho’ng*. While it literally means “thing,” in this title it is simply acting as a redundant possessive marker. This final word of the three, then, clarifies the relationship between the other two elements of the title, forming it unambiguously into *Beliefs of Friends*.

A certain understanding of the book arises just from examining this title: it is a text discussing potentially unfounded opinions about the world that belongs to a we-all of real people, and who are similar to the reader, but are not quite the same. These four concepts—comparative satsana, satsana, latthi, and phu’an—have taken on new meanings in *Beliefs of Friends* as Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip use these words in modern ways. Satsana and latthi are being placed in a direct hierarchy in a way that they were not often before, either in Pali or in religious works in the time of Mongkut or by Wachirayan. However, satsana is also slowly expanding as a category term, which makes the Buddha-Satsana less unique, but it also gives it the ability to relate to other satsanas within a single category. These satsanas and latthis, furthermore, are being related to a whole host of phu’an throughout the world. Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip are trying to bring out a sense of we-all in their readers, reducing the antagonism between religions.

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174 Photchanukrom chabap Ratchabandittyasathan, Pho. So. 2525, s.v. “kho’ng.”
V. A Close Reading

To discover more specifically how Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are relating satsana and religion, I am going to do a close reading of *Beliefs of Friends*, looking at both the Table of Contents\(^{175}\) and the book as a whole. At a hefty six pages, the Table of Contents breaks down the following eight hundred pages into four unequal sections. As the commentator from the introduction writes:

In the real version of this book, there are in all 8 sections, but when this was proposed as the complete version, we could already see that it would be difficult and wasteful. Thus at that time, permission was given to print only sections 1 to 4, which are generally the most popular.\(^ {176}\)

It is unclear as to which eight essays were originally proposed to be bound together.\(^{177}\) By examining how they break down and weight the four sections that they did publish, it is easier to see how Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are categorizing and ranking religions, and how they relate their discussion of comparative satsana to the European discussion of comparative religion.

**Section One**

The first section of *Beliefs of Friends*, originally published in a cremation volume in 1925,\(^ {178}\) is broken down into four main parts: Latthi Christ and Latthi Jew; Latthi Muslim; Latthi Zoroaster; and Satsana-Jain. All five religions take up only about sixty pages. While it seems at first to be just a mindless imitation of a European comparative religion discussion, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip actually are doing a few subtly different things in this section.

\(^{175}\) For a full list of headings in the table of contents, see the Appendix.
First, they put Christianity and Judaism in the same section, and when they reference this section later in the book, they simply refer to it as the section on Latthi Christ. This may show that they are not taking the “older” religion to be the more prominent, but instead are taking the more “popular” Western European religion as the norm. They have collapsed the two due to the historical and geographic coincidence of their arising. While Latthi Muslim is not grouped as closely together with them, it is the next section in the book, and they do draw a connection to Latthi Jew through Abraham. As all three are theistic religions that worship the same God, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip did not always make clear distinctions between them.

The only satsana in this section is Satsana-Jain. They do not ever explicitly say why this is so, but it seems that they consider Satsana-Jain to be similar to the Buddha-Satsana and thus must fall into the same category. It has Indian Sanskritic roots and arose in the same time period as Buddha-Satsana (which they discuss further in the next section). It also has a similar foundation—and here they use the key word lak—as the Buddha-Satsana: “The foundation of the sangha of the satsana of the Jains is the escaping from the suffering of samsara, like in the Buddha-Satsana.” Part of this foundation that they share is, then, the lack of a creator—a defining characteristic of a satsana. They go further into this in Section

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176 Beliefs of Friends, “Introduction.”
177 Many of their articles, though, can be found in the published bibliographies of their collective and Nakhaprathip’s individual works. See Bannanukrom ngan niphon kho’ng Satsatrachan Phraya Anumanratchathon lea Phra Saraprasert [Bibliography of Satsatrachan Phraya Anumanratchathon and Phra Saraprasert’s Work] (Krungthep Mahanakhon: Krom Sinlapakon, 1972); and Bannanukrom ngan niphon kho’ng Phra Saraprasert (Tri Nakhaprathip) [Bibliography of Phra Saraprasert’s Work]. Ekkasan wichakan Ho’samut haeng Chat, andap thi 3 (Krungthep: Ho’samut haeng Chat, Krom Sinlapakon, 1990).
179 Beliefs of Friends, 739.
180 Beliefs of Friends, 27.
181 T: lak
182 T: thuk, P: dukkha
183 Beliefs of Friends, 55.
Two, as they continue to discuss how the two developed out of a very similar situation and in similar circumstances.\textsuperscript{184}

However, they’re not necessarily talking about these religions in terms of their relationship with the Buddha-Satsana or India, but rather how they developed in their own location, and if applicable, their consequent life in Europe. For instance, the section on Christianity talks about “the Hebrews,” the birth of Jesus, and various problems that Christianity encountered in Europe, including it’s incorporation in Rome, various Christian rulers, and the Reformation.

Also, their choice and organization of religions in this section is the most visible place to see the overlap between Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s comparative satsana and a European comparative religion. They seem to be doing something specific here by using a certain template to organize their argument. For one thing, they talk more about Satsana-Jain in the second section, so it would have been possible for them to either combine the sections, or leave this one out all together. However, they did not. This may, in part, be the result of these two sections originally having been published a year apart. Even so, in this first section, they seem to be listing some of the important “great religions” in order to validate their work and make it fit into a certain pattern of scholarship. In fact, their discussions of Latthi Tao and Satsana-Confucius at the end of the book are quite perfunctory when compared to other parts in that section. To be seen as legitimate, they seem to have needed to talk about a certain list of elements. To that end, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip only talk about these seven “isms”\textsuperscript{185} nominally. In the grand scheme of the book, they are not nearly as pivotal as Buddha-Satsana or Latthi Hindu.

\textsuperscript{184} Beliefs of Friends, 93.
\textsuperscript{185} Latthi Christ, Latthi Jew, Latthi Islam, Latthi Zoroaster, Satsana-Jain, Latthi Tao, Satsana-Confucius.
This is apparent in the way they set off Buddha-Satsana from the rest of the religions mentioned, both Satsana-Jain and Satsana-Confucius,\(^\text{186}\) and all the latex. They are trying to treat all these friends the same, but they are still retaining a certain amount of difference and hierarchy among the we-all. This is most notable in the language that they use to describe these friends.

In fact, there isn’t a real parallelism in the language of their comparative satsana until Sathiankoset wrote a new introduction to the 1957 edition of the book. In it, he makes the following list of religions:\(^\text{187}\) Satsana-Zoroaster, Satsana-Brahmin and Hindu, Satsana-Jain, Satsana-Buddha, Satsana-Confucius and Tao, Satsana-Jew, Satsana-Christ, and Satsana-Islam.\(^\text{188}\) On a simple visual level, “Satsana-Buddha” blends in much more with the others. Even if in his mind—or in the minds of the readers—there is no real difference in meaning between Buddha-Satsana and Satsana-Buddha, he still is forcing a new parallelism of form that the two men had not brought out in the body of the text. Satsana-Buddha is just one of many; it looks just like the others; it is not unique. Furthermore, this list of religions that he has given is very similar to the traditional list of “great religions” which were being bandied about at this same time in Europe: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. In this, he seems to be shifting the definition of satsana even further away from the satsana, and is changing it to a pure category description—“religion.” He only takes this stand in this one edition of the book though,

\(^{186}\) Which is now popularly called Latthi Confucius.
\(^{187}\) It is curious that Latthi Lama makes no appearances in this list. Perhaps he could simply not bring himself to fully call it a satsana and so had to leave it out; perhaps it was not a member of the European list he seemed to be working from; perhaps he was including it within Satsana-Buddha. If the latter is the case, this represents another large shift in his thinking: no longer is Latthi Lama a corruption of the True Message, which has been preserved in the Hinayana, it is now part of the “ism,” and has become a valid practice. However, in this short introduction he does not explain himself any further.
\(^{188}\) *Beliefs of Friends* (1957), pp. ιο-ιο.
since it was never reprinted in the 1971 edition. Even so, it is still indicative of how the
category of satsana was mutable for him.

*Beliefs of Friends*, then, seems to describe a world in which a person is constantly
rubbing elbows with others who believe very different things—it is neither a homogenous
neighborhood, nor a religiously hostile neighborhood. This is a world of many “isms,” and,
for that matter, it is a world where there *is such a thing as* an “ism.” As such, it is possible
for the Buddha-Satsana to become Satsana-Buddha, just one more item on a list.

**Section Two**

Section Two is a chronological look at the development of Latthi Hindu in India.

This history includes a look at Latthi Brahmin; Latthi Hindu; the Buddha-Satsana and
Satsana-Jain; and a brief look at Latthi Mahayana.\(^{189}\) It was originally published in a
cremation volume in 1926.\(^{190}\) In the introduction to this section, Sathiankoset and
Nakhapratthip trace a bit of the history and influences of Latthi Hindu:

> The latthi in the modern times in India—called as a whole “Latthi Hindu”—has
branches broken off into major minority *nikayas* which are overlapping, entangled,
and enmeshed, but [they] have foundations\(^{191}\) practiced together, and so [Hindus]
must behave according to [their] prescribed latthi\(^{192}\)….Latthi Hindu has a
foundation\(^{193}\) and legends which are similar to, but have changed from, Latthi
Brahmin—[the same as] within Latthi Brahmin itself, Buddha-Satsana, and Satsana-
Jain, [since] they all have brought in technical words\(^{194}\) and changed their [the
words’] essences\(^{195}\) in order to fit with a desired image,\(^{196}\) such as the words
“Brahmin,” “*nibbana,*” “*moksa-dhamma*” etc. This work will show Latthi Hindu to
be seen clearly, explain Latthi Brahmin as the root origin, and discuss Buddha-

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189 *Beliefs of Friends*, 740.
191 T: *lak*
192 *Beliefs of Friends*, 66.
193 T: *lak*
194 T: kham bannati
195 T: nu’a khwam
196 T: rup, P: rūpa
Satsana in brief: [this discussion] explains the latthi of friends in this second section, [which is] a mixture of [these] three latthi (the latthi of friends for Buddha-Satsana is [here] Latthi Mahayana).\textsuperscript{197}

Here, latthi is being used as a generic category, encompassing Latthi Brahmin, Latthi Hindu, and the Buddha-Satsana. This is not surprising, however; Sathiankoset had warned readers that they would be doing this in his 1927 introduction: “This [book] was given the name \textit{Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an} because most are latthi, though in truth there are also satsana mixed in.”\textsuperscript{198} Even in this generic usage, though, they are still aware of a hierarchical difference. In this way, they are using the lowest common denominator (latthi) to talk of latthi and satsana collectively. This appears to be less distasteful to them than to raise the prestige of latthis by grouping them under an umbrella term of satsana.

Like many other modern academics, they are creating a single entity called Latthi Hindu, which is, in this case, quite distinct from Latthi Brahmin. Latthi Hindu may have developed out of it, but Latthi Brahmin is something much larger than Latthi Hindu. After all, Buddha-Satsana and Satsana-Jain also developed out of Latthi Brahmin. Latthi Brahmin, then, is similar to all three religions. In making this distinction, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are participating in a world where there exists a Hinduism.

The concept of “same but not the same” is also evident in their discussion on the change of the meanings of words such as “Brahmin,” “\textit{nibbana},” and “\textit{moksa-dhamma}.” They discuss this process of appropriation in a very positivist way: there are multiple images of the world, and the “essence” of the words much be reshaped to fit each new reality.\textsuperscript{199} The new meanings, the new realities, are the same but quite the same as the old ones.

\textsuperscript{197} Beliefs of Friends, 65.
\textsuperscript{198} Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, \textit{Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an, Phak 1} (1927), p. 91.
\textsuperscript{199} Incidentally, this seems to be also how I am dealing with them and their usage of latthi and satsana: they are participating in a new reality and then take these words and reshape them to make sense in this new way.
In the Table of Contents, a clearer picture emerges as to how they view the histories of these similar realities. The discussion is broken down into the following broad categories:

Latthi Hindu in Dark Times\textsuperscript{200} / The Time of the Three Vedas / The Time of Brahmins\textsuperscript{201} / The Time of Real Hindus\textsuperscript{202} / The Time of the Upanisads, the Buddha-Satsana, and Satsana-Jain / The Time of the Sutra and the Sutta / The Time of the Avatar\textsuperscript{203} / The Time of Decline\textsuperscript{204} / The Time of the Restoration\textsuperscript{205} of Latthi / The Time of Faith\textsuperscript{206} / A Hindu in the Present / The Bodhisattva in Latthi Mahayana

Almost every time period is neatly subdivided into History, Latthi, and Literature. There are a few oddities. “Latthi Hindu in the Dark Times” is subdivided by “The Aryan Peoples” and “The Peoples of India and Iran.” “The Time of Real Hindus” has no Literature, while “The Time of the Upanisads, the Buddha-Satsana, and Satsana-Jain” only has a Literature section. The section “A Hindu in the Present,” like “Latthi Hindu in the Dark Times,” is divided up much more carefully into “People can still be a Hindu,” “Beliefs\textsuperscript{207} of people in the low varnas,” and “Latthi of Sakti and Tantra.” Finally, “The Bodhisattva in Latthi Mahayana” is divided into “The Bodhisattva” and “The Buddha in Latthi Mahayana.”

However, while Latthi Hindu was developing right next to the Buddha-Satsana and Satsana-Jain, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip do not call it a satsana. For one thing, Latthi Hindu, in their timeline, is a larger and older entity than either the Buddha-Satsana (or Satsana-Jain, but they treat this as almost a subset of Buddha-Satsana) and has had a much different developmental trajectory. More fundamental than that, though, is the fact that Latthi Hindu speaks of creators and Satsana-Jain and the Buddha-Satsana do not. While the

\textsuperscript{200} T: samai [P: samaya] du’k dam ban. All instances of “time” in this section are the Thai word “samai,” from the Pali “samaya.”
\textsuperscript{201} T: samai phramana
\textsuperscript{202} T: samai hindu thae
\textsuperscript{203} T: avatan
\textsuperscript{204} T: su’am
\textsuperscript{205} T: fu’n
\textsuperscript{206} T: phak di
\textsuperscript{207} T: kan nap thu’
authors are drawing a distinction between the theistic and non-theistic religions, the satsanas and latthis in this chapter are still held together by their geographic—and to some extent, temporal—proximity.

They are very aware of a linear vision of the development of the history of these latthi: Latthi Brahmin begot Latthi Hindu (which begot Buddha-Satsana and Satsana-Jain), and then begot manifold modern nikayas, which are still known by this single common descriptor. While each time period is dependant upon another for its definition (a “Time of Restoration” would make no sense had there not been a “Time of Decline” just before it), each one clearly follows the previous time. To some extent, doctrine, text, and ritual are irrelevant; it is only due to the coincidence of the temporal proximity of their development that all these different latthi and satsana have been arranged chronologically. In this way, Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip seem to be treating the development of Latthi Hindu in India in a similar way that European scholars treat the development of Christianity of the Western Church, paralleling these theistic traditions. Christianity arose from Judaism, became the early Church, then fell into the dark ages, came out in the Reformation, and now exists in modernity. In the same way, a “primordial” Latthi Hindu arose in the Dark Times, which had to go through some permutations until the “real” Hindus finally emerged. There were some further developments, a decline, a return, and finally Latthi Hindu become what it is known to be today.

With these parallels existing between their “age” divisions and the division of time in the Western Church, they seem to be aligning themselves with modern European academia. However, it is not pure mimicry. They are still referencing and invoking their own lineage, visible even in how they decide to attach latthi and satsana to Hindu, Buddha, Jain, and
Mahayana. This requires a set of values and category definitions that are not existent in this European conversation.

**Section Three**

Section Three is a two-part examination of the latthi of Tibet. It was originally published as two essays, one in a cremation volume in 1927, and the other, “Latthi Lama,” was published separately in 1927. The first part discusses legends of the Buddha-Satsana from India which later traveled towards Tibet. The second part of Section Three, approximately twice as long as part one, is devoted to Latthi Lama.

In this section, they are bringing a modern European conversation into their own modern Thai conversation—a full we-all. The first part of their chapter places nikayas into a larger (European) historical picture of the development of the early Buddha-Satsana:

- The First Council / The Second Council / The Causes which lead to the division into nikayas / And the nikayas / The Third Council / The Kusana Peoples / The Council at the Time of Lord Kaniska / Latthi Mahayana / Latthi Yogacara / Buddha-Tantra

To understand the peculiarity of this history, it helps to look to other accounts being written at the same time. In 1923, Phra Pariyatithammathada translated into Thai Somdet Phra Wannarat’s Pali account of a sangayana (Council) which took place in Bangkok in 1788—

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209 Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip, Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an, Phak 3 Ton 2 (Phranakhon: Rongphim Sophan Phipattanakhon, 1927).
210 Beliefs of Friends, 740.
211 In Thai, a nikai is a sect, denomination or branch. It can be used to describe divisions within any religion, including the Buddha-Satsana and Latthi Christ.
212 P: Pathama Sangayana. The Pali names (Dutiya, Tatiya) for the councils are used consistently through this section.
213 T, P: hetu
214 This section contains a discussion of the Theravada, Mahasanghika, Sarvastivada, and Sammatiya nikayas.
215 T: chat kusan, S: jāti-kuśāna
216 T: samai, P: samaya
the *Sangitiyavamsa (Sangkhitiyawong)*.\(^{217}\) This was then given a preface by Prince Damrong and affixed with Prince Wachirayan’s seal. It describes a Buddhism which culminates in Thailand—not in the Mahayana/Tantra path that they have outlined in this section. Since this translation of the *Sangitiyavamsa* was published a full two years before Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip began writing, and since Nakhaprathip, a well-trained former monk, was working closely with Prince Wachirayan and King Wachirawut, they very likely would have known something about and had access to the content of this translation. Instead of following this history, though, they again seem to be drawing from a European history of the transmission of Buddhism.

More European influences show themselves in the “And the *nikayas*” section. Here, they give an historical account of the early development of the *nikayas* of the Buddha-Satsana. They discuss four different *nikayas* within the Indian Buddha-Satsana: Theravada (which they relate to the Sthaviravada and the Vibhajjavada *nikayas*), Mahasanghika, Sarvastivada, and Sammatiya.\(^{218}\) However, their treatment of each *nikaya* is not the same. For instance, while there are in total 76 pages devoted to the Indian *nikayas* of the Buddha-Satsana, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip only use one of these pages for the Theravada. While it is short, they do give this section a lot of weight. In explaining the Theravada, they say:

> The Theravada Nikaya is the *nikaya* which has not become unstable on the foundation\(^{219}\) of the Buddha-Satsana (which would have made it deviate away from that of the Elders who all practice as they did in old times), as stated earlier in the book. Scholars figured out [what] this *nikaya* [is] by comparing it to various

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\(^{218}\) They never give a justification for their choice of these four schools. It may have come from Rhys David’s *The Sects of the Buddhists*, but it is unclear.

\(^{219}\) T: lak
foundational bases,\textsuperscript{220} and [they] agreed that it is the same \textit{nikaya} as the Vibhajjavada Nikaya—the southern \textit{nikaya} which continues on into the present day…[T]he latthi which are mentioned in the Pali Tripitika are things of the Theravada Nikaya, which is often called the Vibhajjavada Nikaya,\textsuperscript{221} because it has a way of teaching the dhamma which is separate from the others. More information on the story of the Theravada can be found in the book the \textit{Mahavamsa}.\textsuperscript{222}

Throughout this section, they use in an emotionally-neutral way simply to refer to a set of religious beliefs. This usage of latthi is not diametrically opposed to satsana, nor does it touch on the question of creators. This seems to explain how the “things of the Theravada Nikaya”—the firm and unchanging \textit{nikaya}—can be described as only latthi.

In this section on the Theravada, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip have created a modern outline of the history of the development of the \textit{nikayas}. The way they both set up the parts in the section, and speak of the lineage of the schools creates a continuous progression from one time to the next, changing and transforming so that “then” is no longer the same as “now.” They are also talking about a reified—foundational—teaching, which did exist at one point and from which all subsequent teachings except for the Theravada have deviated. The Theravada has kept the teachings of the Elders alive into the present. However, even the Theravada exists in this progressing lineage: by scientifically comparing it to the foundations of other schools, scholars can deduce that it is the same as the Vibhajjavada and related to the Sthaviravada. Here, also, they call the Theravada a “southern school,” an indirect reference to a larger \textit{Buddhism} to which there is, in fact, a south and a north. Similar to a family tree, the reader can follow the history of a school from branch to branch. Here, the authors display the hierarchy of \textit{nikayas} which have developed within the

\textsuperscript{220} T: lak thana
\textsuperscript{221} In Pali, the name of this \textit{nikaya} literally means “the teaching of discrimination.”
\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, 207-8.
Buddha-Satsana. These nikayas, by themselves, do not exist even as latthis, let alone satsanas.

The second part of this section deals with Latthi Lama in a national context. It discusses a wide range of subjects, relying heavily on *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*\(^{223}\) by L. Austine Waddell for organization and content. These include:

- Countries of Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal / History, and Lamas in Tibet / The Lama Nikaya / Latthi [in the] Dharma\(^{224}\) / Scriptures\(^ {225}\) / The Collection of Commentary\(^ {226}\) / The Order\(^ {227}\) of Lamas / Clothing of Lamas / Routine of Lamas / Livelihood\(^ {228}\) of Lamas / Food of Lamas / Characteristics of Rules for Lamas and Lamas Who Are Reborn\(^ {229}\) / Lama Monastery Complexes\(^ {230}\) / Lama Temple Buildings\(^ {231}\) / Temples in Lhasa / Sacred Places\(^ {232}\) / Buddha and Bodhisattva Images / The Lord Buddha / Adibuddha / Jhanibuddha / Lord Manusi-Buddha / Nadhibodhisattvas / Yidam / Dharmapala / Respectable Spirits and Bad Spirits\(^ {233}\) / Siddhi Experts\(^ {234}\) / Equipment and Its Significance / The Mandala Puja / Latthi [of] Puja

In this part, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are specifically locating Latthi Lama within Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal. While they talk extensively about its many local influences, they are acknowledging Buddhist influences within the latthi—namely, specific Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and how to worship them. The entity of Buddhism entered and mildly, but not fundamentally, changed Latthi Lama. Instead of being centered on the texts of an “ism,” Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip center Latthi Lama around the people involved—visible even in the name they use for it. They go into minor daily details in the life of the Lamas by

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\(^{224}\) T: latthi-tham, P: laddhi-dhamma. The dhamma here includes a discussion of “anatta,” the “ariya-sacca,” and the “paramis,” among other things.

\(^{225}\) T: phra khamphi, P: ˚-gambhīra

\(^{226}\) T: muat-atthakatha, P: ˚-atthakathā

\(^{227}\) T: khana-song, P: gana-sangha

\(^{228}\) T: achiva, P: ājīva

\(^{229}\) T: laksana pokkho’ng lama—lama thi avatan

\(^{230}\) T: wat

\(^{231}\) T: vihan, P: vīhāra

\(^{232}\) T: sathanthi saksit, S: ˚-şakdi-siddhi

\(^{233}\) T: cao phi lae phut phi

\(^{234}\) T: nak sit
discussing their clothes, food, and daily routine. Even while there is a strong influence of the Buddha-Satsana, Latthi Lama is clearly about people and spirits.

They also discuss the lineage deviation again, using the pejorative term latthi to place Latthi Lama lower in the religious hierarchy than the Buddha-Satsana. Latthi Lama, while perhaps heavily influenced by the Buddha-Satsana, has clearly become a new entity unto itself:

This latthi [Lama] is continued from (1) the Buddha-Satsana of Tantrayana, which is a *nikaya* which was born in the *region* of Bengal in India (2) The latthi of the Mantrayana, which includes Latthi Hindu in the time after it had entered and permeated into many things…. [T]hey also mixed it in with ancient *native* latthi which had to do with beliefs in *local* spirits, called ‘bonpa.’ Therefore, Latthi Lama is a latthi which is mixed up until it becomes a very strange and wrong deviation from its origin in the Buddha-Satsana.

In this passage, as they talk about *regions*, *native* latthis, and *local* spirits, they are describing a new influence on the development of a latthi: place. They say this even more clearly when speaking of the different between Latthi Mahayana and Latthi Lama:

Latthi Mahayana has been divided into various *nikayas* according to the preferences in the countries where it is believed; for instance, the Buddha-Satsana in Tibet can be called Mahayana, but this latthi which they believe is called *Lama*, and it has [local] preferences which deviate from those coming from other countries.

In both passages, the country—the local—has changed the satsana and the latthi for the worse. Sathiankoset and Nakhapratthip are devaluing the local and revering the translocal. This also tells us that, for them, the true Buddha-Satsana cannot survive when it is mixed with any sort of local influences. Furthermore, since they speak of the Hinayana as the solid,
unchanged nikaya, they are implying that the Hinayana has avoided being mixed up with these local detrimental influences.

Even while Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are speaking of the Hinayana as being unchanged and of the Mahayana as being a tumultuous conglomeration of the Buddha-Satsana and all sorts of strange and wrong local belief, they are still recognizing that the Hinayana, the Mahayana, the Tantrayana, and all the other nikayas are part of the same entity. Even if they are located in different countries and seem to have very different beliefs, they are still part of the Buddha-Satsana—Buddhism. They bring out this division very clearly in the opening paragraph of this section:

The Buddha-Satsana in the present in divided into two latthis. [The first is] the latthi of the north….This is called Mahayana. And [the second is] the latthi of the south….It got its name, [which is Hinayana,] from the terminology of the north.\textsuperscript{240}

Again, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are recognizing that there is some sameness in what seems to not be the same. To illustrate this, they use the neutral definition as latthi as a generic religious belief. They are clearly aware of the concept of the Hinayana, the “lesser vehicle” which exists only in relationship with the “greater vehicle” of the Mahayana and was often spoken of in that term by contemporaneous European scholars. These two latthis may exist in different geographical locations, and one may be “strange and wrong,” while the other is steadfast and unchanging—but within both, there is something that unites them. Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are not necessarily claiming that they are similar—in fact they are quite aware of many differences and faults—but they are creating a mutual understanding, a solidarity, between the latthis of the Theravada and the Mahayana.

\textsuperscript{240} Beliefs of Friends, 183.
Section Four

The fourth and final section, which takes up about half of the book, discusses the latthi-satsana of the Chinese in four sub-parts. The first part was published in the journal *Thai Kasem* in 1928, and is a short discussion of Satsana-Confucius, Latthi Tao, and the Mahayana Buddha-Satsana. It also includes a longer 50-page discussion of the Sen ceremony, which is a ceremony that involves offering food to the dead to help them find heaven. Part two came out in 1931, the majority of which consists of the story “Kwanim: The Bodhisattva of Compassion,” which they had translated from an English novel, *The Vision of Kwannon Sama* by B. L. Broughton. Based on stories Broughton had heard from Chinese friends, it is about Kwanim’s previous rebirth as Miaw-San. However, there is also a discussion in this part about the creation of images and other Bodhisattvas, like Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. The third part, about the Eighteen Arahants, never seems to have been published separately. The fourth came out in 1932, and is about statues and images of the Five Hundred Arahants. However, while it is listed in the 1957 Table of Contents, they did not include it in the 1971 Table of Contents. In their own words, they describe the contents of the first three parts of this section:

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245 Sathiankoset and Nakharaprathip, “Ngopaelo’han, ru’ Phra Arahant ha roy chan ton, ru’ Latthi Kho’ng Phu’an Phak 4 Ton 4” [Ngopaelo’han, or 500 Arahants of the First Level, or *Beliefs of Friends* Section 4 Part 4].
246 These five hundred Arahants were reborn as the five hundred monks at the First Council.
The Chinese have many representative images for [their] latthi. Thus part one is a complete explanation of the latthi from all over that land. Discussing the stories of those images is [the work of] the next part. Since there are a lot of these images, we will tell their stories together in a single section. Part two [thus] focuses on analyzing these images. In the third part [that is called] “The 18 Arahants,” there are many accounts that have to do with the [historical] images, which are the foundation of Wat Mangkon Kamalawat.

In this section, they are working with a new medium from which they can draw information: images. Not only are they the basis for stories, but they also act as non-literary academic sources. Also, while they still draw very heavily from European authors all throughout this section, they do not draw exclusively from European authors. The wat images have just as valid a place in this modern discussion as does Broughton.

When talking about the Chinese in this section, Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip still seem unsure as to whether they should use the terms latthi and satsana in a hierarchical, theistic, or generic way, and so settle on doing all three. In this combination, latthi and satsana both take on a new force, with latthi becomes more foundational, and satsana becomes more generic. Indeed, there seems to be the beginnings of a convergence of the two terms. They open up the section by saying: “The latthi [based in the] satsana of the Chinese can be divided generally into three: Confucius, Tao, and Mahayana Buddha.” In their actual list itself, they do not include the word latthi or satsana, causing the reader to leap back to the modifiers provided earlier in the sentence: latthi and satsana. This does two things: associates Latthi Tao with a satsana, and Satsana-Confucius and Buddha-Satsana with a latthi. This perhaps may be due to the fact that, as they note, most Chinese tend to not

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247 T: rup pathima, P: rūpa paṭimā
248 T: phannana, P: vaṭṭanā
249 T: khau
250 T: lak
251 Beliefs of Friends, 740, emphasis mine.
252 Beliefs of Friends, 407.
choose just one, but “hold a belief in the latthi-satsana\textsuperscript{253} of all three together.” \textsuperscript{254} A confluence of religions leads to a confluence of terms.

In this section, latthi is frequently used to refer to satsana (Satsana-Confucius and the Buddha-Satsana) and latthi (Latthi Tao) collectively. They struggle most blatantly, however, with the adjective they use for Satsana-Confucius. They explain their word choice in this way:

This latthi [Satsana-Confucius] can be called “satsana,” [which is] more appropriate than calling it “latthi,” because Confucius ([who lived from] PS 8 to PS 64), the founder,\textsuperscript{255} was mainly a philosopher\textsuperscript{256} [who] taught groups of people how to behave well, for the benefit of happiness\textsuperscript{257} in this rebirth more than in the next rebirth.\textsuperscript{258}

They are making a clear distinction between satsana and latthi. This shows that they have made a conscious choice as to which terms to use in which situations. The defining characteristic here seems to be the presence of a creator. While they put emphasis on Confucius himself, he is only a founder of a school of thought, and not the creator of the whole universe.

The mark of a satsana perhaps comes from Europe. In this whole section, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are drawing heavily from Herbert Giles’ \textit{Religions of Ancient China}. At one point, they quote Giles quoting Confucius: “Honor spirits,\textsuperscript{259} but keep them far away.” \textsuperscript{260} While he acknowledges that there are supernatural powers in Confucius’

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{253} T: nap thu’ latthi satsana
\item \textsuperscript{254} \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, 407.
\item \textsuperscript{255} T: phu satsada S: 'śāsdā
\item \textsuperscript{256} T: nak prad S: 'prājñā
\item \textsuperscript{257} T: khwam suk, P: 'sukhā
\item \textsuperscript{258} \textit{Beliefs of Friends}, 407.
\item \textsuperscript{259} T: phi
worldview of “benevolent agnosticism,” Giles does not treat them as central players in the story. He sums up Confucianism by dubbing it “entirely a system of morality, and not a religion.”

In their own discussion, Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip seem to be invoking this very European conception that there are no creator-gods in Confucianism but that it is just a non-theistic philosophy for living one’s life. In fact, the bulk of the section on Satsana-Confucius is simply a description of a Sen ceremony, which is performed to help the dead, and how the living should perform it.

In this section, latthi and satsana are starting to move away from their more hierarchical meanings and are becoming either a general category like religion, or are divided by the question of a creator. However, this is not true across the board. Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip still keep a hierarchical distinction between latthi and satsana in their discussion of Chinese and Japanese Mahayana:

The Buddha-Satsana, which is believed in China, is the Mahayana and is of the sort which has Chinese things mixed in with it, in the same way that Latthi Lama of Tibet has characteristics of ‘bonpa’ [beliefs in local spirits] mixed in with it. The story of Buddhist organization in Japan confirms that the Lord Buddha spoke about the foundation of Mahayana only just superficially; the original and genuine dharma of the Lord Buddha is according to the foundation of the Hinayana.

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261 Giles, Religions of Ancient China, chap. 2.
262 Ibid., chap. 2.
263 Beliefs of Friends, 407-410.
264 T: nap thu’ kan
265 T: kho’ng cin
266 Beliefs of Friends 421.
267 T: lak
268 T: phiang tae phio phio
269 T: du’m an thae cing
270 T: lak
271 Beliefs of Friends, 448.
This sounds very similar to what modern academics were saying about Buddhism in Europe at this same time—particularly because of Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s use of the term Hinayana. They are reinforcing a Buddhist solidarity, connecting the Hinayana of the south with the Mahayana of China and Japan. While they associate Chinese Mahayana with Latthi Lama, in terms of having other things mixed in it with them, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip still consider the Mahayana to be an (impure) part of the Buddha-Satsana. Latthi Lama, however, is not. While they mention that there are parts of the Buddha-Satsana within Latthi Lama, they claim it has been changed too much to still be considered a real part of the satsana. This does not seem to be the case in China; the satsana there may have been changed and diluted, but it was still spoken of by the Buddha. Not only is this helping to reinforce a solidarity with other members of the Buddha-Satsana in other parts of the world, but there is a special tie being created with members of the Chinese Buddha-Satsana.

One noticeable detail about this section is its length: over half the book is dedicated to talking about China. Sathiankoset himself was born to Chinese parents. He would have been very aware of the necessity of integrating the Chinese people into a greater Thai identity or Thainess. The anonymous commentator had mentioned in the introduction to the 1971 edition that they had chosen these sections to publish because they were “generally the most popular” when they had been published separately. The publishers are both looking backwards and forwards in making this decision: which sections have people read the most in the past? which sections will be the most popular in the future? The answer to both of these questions seems to be Chinese religions. On account of its dual proximity and strangeness,

\[^{272}\text{Beliefs of Friends, “Introduction.”}\]
these are something that their readers would be familiar with, but would also be interested in learning more about.

Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip start to get into this learning process in the introduction to section four. Here, they describe difficulties of communication between a Chinese speaker and a Thai speaker who are both in a Chinese wat. In this imaginary conversation, the visitor is trying to understand the images in the wat, and wants a full explanation.

[One] could ask Chinese people, who have come [to a Chinese wat] to do puja, [about the various sorts of images in the wat], and [one] could also get an explanation which isn’t very clear because [the Thai person and the Chinese person] can barely understand each other, and the language which must be used to explain [the images] is most likely [full of] words which are specific to the latthi-satsana.

This is a very different vision of understanding one’s friends than is seen throughout the rest of the book. For one thing, there are people present and there is human contact between them. However, since Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip never name who the invisible subject of the sentence is, I must assume that this is a Thai-speaking person, simply because this seems to be their intended audience. In doing this, they are putting their readers in touch with people they might actually meet and with places where they might actually go in their daily lives—even if it is only imagined. Even through a language barrier, there is a realism and a familiarity which is not present in the rest of the book.

This same sentiment is reflected in the introduction to Beliefs of Friends which was written by an anonymous commentator. In that, the commentator urges the readers, once they have finished reading this book, “to go study with real things” which are located all

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273 There is no stated subject in this sentence—I am implying the Thai speaker.
274 Beliefs of Friends, 401.
275 T: kho’ng cing
around oneself, such as going to see a Chinese temple.”276 The assumed “one” in this sentence is a Thai-speaking person, and this assumed Thai-speaking person has easy and ready access to a Chinese temple.

This theme of talking to Chinese people is repeated often throughout the section, such as when they are describing the Eighteen Arahants: “What is the history of this group of images? One can hear the explanation of many Chinese friends….”277 Here, they blatantly call Chinese people their Chinese friends. Even if they are simply speaking of them as part of a we-all, this is in sharp contrast to other sections of the book, where people are spoken of in more distant (academic) terms.

Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are urging the readers to enter into conversation with people who live in close geographic proximity to themselves, but who perhaps speak a different language or worship at a different wat. In this, they are helping to forge an image of what it means to be Thai. In the context of Beliefs of Friends, then, they are referring to a Thainess which is not dependant on a geographic conception of nation, but is based on language and religion.278 They’re not Chinese because they live far away, but because they speak a different language and worship in a different wat. The Chinese are still somehow the same, even as they are not the same.

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276 Beliefs of Friends, vi.
277 Beliefs of Friends, 746.
278 For instance, the same people who could not communicate through the language barrier that they discussed in the above example, and who were marked by a distinction between Hinayana and Mahayana, still seem to live close enough together that it is possible to have these discussions between friends.
VI. Later Commentary

Sathiankoset and Nakhapratthip accomplished many subtle things with this book, which have been given a louder voice by readers who commented on their work years later. The 1971 reprinting of Beliefs of Friends, which came out only two years after Sathiankoset died, opens with a short introduction written by an anonymous commentator from the Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation.279 The first half of it discusses how and why the book was written, even quoting Sathiankoset’s biography of Nakhapratthip to elaborate on their writing process. The second half of this introduction, however, quickly gets very details, with specific directions on how to read Beliefs of Friends and how one should conduct oneself after reading it:

But even [with] only this [sections one through four], we believe280 that the reader will be able to derive a benefit [which will make reading this] worthwhile.281 Although many things which are mentioned in this book will become out of date,282 Beliefs of Friends will still be a book which creates many impressions,283 provided that one should read it attentively,284 by examining it carefully.285 And when you have finished reading it, it will lead you to go study with real things286 which are located all around oneself, such as going to see a Chinese temple. Go converse287 with friends who have different latthi and different satsana, by holding to the principle288 of respecting the beliefs289 of that person. Also, you will, for sure, get abundant benefit290 from this book.291

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279 This was founded by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1968. According to the Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation website, it was named after them because they “were the intellectual link of the traditional and modern Thai society.” See Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation, “Who We Are: A brief introduction,” http://www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/about1.php.
280 T: chu’a
281 T: prayot, S: prayojana
282 T: la samai pai
283 T: atthat, S: artha-rasa
284 T: manasikā. In Pali, it is usually translated as “fixed attention.”
285 T: doi phinit phikhro, S: ˚vigrah
286 T: kho’ng cing
287 T: samsandana
288 T: yu’t lak
289 T: khwam chu’a
290 T: prayot…sombun, S: prayojana…sampūnā
291 Beliefs of Friends, vi.
While these may not be Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s words—and I would like to emphasize that point, to avoid confusion between the thoughts of the two authors and their later commentator—it is a glimpse into how people were reading their work. In fact, this was not just anyone reading and commenting on this text—this person was a member of the Foundation devoted to keeping the spirit of their work alive. A reading of this commentary, then, will not only give an idea of the reception of their book, but also provide a synopsis of many of the main points of Beliefs of Friends.

“[T]he reader will [for sure] be able to derive [abundant] benefit [which will make reading this] worthwhile.”

Clearly, the commentator has a high opinion of Beliefs of Friends and thinks of it as more than just a reference guide, or a fascinating academic study. Reading this book will somehow improve the individual reader as a person. It is a good exercise for everyone to do—there is no restriction that only certain people can understand what they are talking about. Anyone from any latthi or satsana can see the truth in Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s words. While the commentator does not go into specifics as to how the reader will be benefited, he or she is certain that the benefit will be good enough to make reading through the eight hundred pages a worthwhile exercise.

The only limit as to who the ideal reader is seems to revolve around language: this person must be a Thai speaker. Even while Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip were translating many different works both into and out of Thai, they left this piece in its original language. They are not aiming their discussion, which is heavily influenced by Europe, at Europeans.

“[M]any things…in this book will become out of date.”
Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip had originally written the articles that became Beliefs of Friends—specifically those on Latthi Hindu and the Buddha-Satsana—in part to help them understand the Danish Buddha-era novel Kamanita. In that way, they were writing it as a teaching tool, or a reference for themselves. One might expect them to think that other people might enjoy using it in the same way: as a way of learning about other things which are same, but not the same. However, they don’t seem to be writing it solely as an encyclopedia, since they do include things like the lengthy story of Kwanim in it. Instead, it is a collection of various works and various types of writing, with one thing in common: they were all translated from or based on European scholarship.

Thus, there could be many different causes for it to go out of date. Scholastic theories or operating manuals can go out of date; The Truth, like good poetry, does not. Beliefs of Friends, then, is being seen as a work that is not innately true, but that has been logically deduced and analyzed. It contains facts. This also implies that the facts in this book could be proven wrong.

However, the commentator is only speculating that “many things” will go out of date—perhaps not all of them. There may be an implied hierarchy between teachings or parts of the book; since this is not elaborated on by the commentator, though, I cannot speculate further. Furthermore, these satsana and latthi hold the possibility of change; they are not all completely eternal truths. Religion, then, is a historical peculiarity. Instead of being based in an unalterable Truth, it is simply based on the vagaries of Time. This also implies that the human behavior of readers changes over time, so that comments made one year will not be valid the next.
Also, the authors’ opinions about what they had written could change over the years. This has happened with other texts, as Sulak Sivaraksa comments in an Introduction to a different text by Sathiankoset:

Although Phya Anuman [Sathiankoset] changed his mind on certain academic subjects, and some of his articles may be out of date by now, we think we should compile them as he wrote them…to show…how this man of letters tried to present his views as sincerely as he could with all his limitations.\(^\text{292}\)

Here, Sulak is showing an image of Sathiankoset which is full of imperfections and human frailty. In the same way, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip were defined by their humanity as they wrote *Beliefs of Friends*. They have the ability to change their minds, and so any single book may end up disagreeing with or not fitting in well with their later work. Imperfect authors create imperfect texts which do not hold true for all time. They are not vessels for something greater, but are simply two men making observations.

“[O]ne should read it attentively.”

The word the commentator uses for “attentively” comes directly from the Pali, manasikāra, and is used rarely in normal Thai conversation. It is a very specifically Buddhist term, literally meaning a “pointed mind.” In Thai, it can be defined as “limitation or scheduling of the heart-mind.”\(^\text{293}\) Both of these give a sense of needing to structure or focus the mind, not letting it wander. It is not a book that one is to read while half-asleep or preoccupied with something else. It is to be read carefully, seriously considered, and internalized. This, then, follows from the previous statement about benefit: only by this careful reading will one get the benefit which can change one’s life.


\(^{293}\) Photchanukrom chabap Ratchabandittyasathan, *Pho. So. 2525.*, s.v. “manasikan.”
While *Beliefs of Friends* deals with many different satsanas and latthis, it is arising from a specific tradition: the Theravada. Manasikāra, in fact, is a tool for doing insight, or vipassana, meditation. In this way, the reader can use this book as a meditation aid. Even though *Beliefs of Friends* itself hardly deals with the Theravada, the commentator is still using very technical Pali terms to understand how to approach it. This helps us to identify the readers of this book: they know something about the Theravada. It is not written for all of the friends to read.

“*[O]ne should…[examine] it carefully.*”

The commentator is inviting readers not only to read and appreciate what Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are saying, but also to think on it in a focused manner, to think over the finer points of their descriptions and arguments, and to be critical of it. This, of course, implies that it is possible to find fault with what they wrote. These are human authors talking about human things, and, as such, imperfections will creep in. In order to find these imperfections, readers must rely on their own judgments. By doing this, they are not lessening the message or the power of the book—even reading it this way, one can still derive benefit.

“*It will lead you to go study with real things…[like] a Chinese temple.*”

In this example, the commentator is assuming that both his or her introduction and the book itself are written for Thai people. In choosing a Chinese temple as the example of “real things,” it shows that the Thai-speaking audience that they are writing for would have access to such things. These temples are a “foreign” thing in their midst, and all three people—Sathiankoset, Nakhaprathip, and their commentator—are inviting readers to start to explore
and make friends with these neighbors who live in the same nation, but have latthi which are not the same.

The commentator is also reminding readers that this focused critique should not end when they put the book down. Indeed, this is where the benefit comes from: it helps one in one’s life. *Beliefs of Friends* is not just mindless reading material. The commentator claims that Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are intending for this to be a serious tool, a manual, for people to use to shape their lives.

“Go converse with friends who have different latthi and different satsana, by holding to the principle of respecting the beliefs of that person.”

The commentator is very clearly drawing some distinctions in this comment. For one thing, there is both a reinforcement and a dissolving of the separation between latthi and satsana. The author felt it necessary to talk about both, and not to subsume one under the other. However, there is also a distinct “us” and “them” in this comment. With the category definition of both words comes a group membership inherent in these concepts; a latthi and a satsana are not simply free-floating “ethical systems.”

The commentator is also reinforcing an appreciation of those who are the same but not the same. However, the readers should not simply go visit temples and look at statues, but are to speak with people, to open their minds and to have discussions. The commentator warns them to stay respectful, though, seemingly in an attempt to ward off conversion attempts. This is all in the service of mutual understanding.

This also appears to be a way for Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip to heal wounds caused by Christian missionaries and their strong—and generally negative—attitudes towards other peoples’ religions. In his autobiography, Sathiankoset has very harsh words to
say about a few specific Christian comparative religion books. He was unhappy with the
way that they did not understand the people to whom they were preaching. He then holds up
Brother Hilaire, the Christian *phuttha-mamaka*, as an example of a good missionary, and then
takes his example and shows it to his Thai Buddhist readers as a way for them to interact
with people who are the same but not the same. This was written in the hope that not all
people of different religions must approach each other in the same judgmental way.
However, it is only the Buddhist-Christian missionary who escapes his wrath; Sathiankoset
himself has, at least somewhat, fallen into his own trap. Even in his attempt at healing, there
is still ambiguity.

All of this is in tension with Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip’s very strong stance on
the topic of Latthi Mahayana, which in China is simply a deviation from what the Buddha
really taught, and in Tibet, as Latthi Lama—which they only hesitantly and loosely associate
with Latthi Mahayana—is “strange and wrong.”294 There seems to be a fundamental
difference in kind between Latthi Mahayana, as part of the Buddha-Satsana, and any other
latthi. Aside from the lack of a creator, it is also much more familiar and geographically
closer. Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip have the opportunity, then, to be much more critical
about it than Latthi Jew, for instance. There will always be this tension, then, between the
need to be critical, and the desire to respect one’s friends. While they never speak of it
directly, this pull can be felt throughout the book.

Within this one commentary, then, *Beliefs of Friends* is acting as a teaching tool, a
manual for making oneself a better person with a stronger mind, a tool for meditation, a
guide for improving ones’ relationships with friends, and a religious reference for Thai

294 *Beliefs of Friends*, 257.
people. Furthermore, it talks about satsana and latthi which are not eternal, but change over time—and as such constantly need to be questioned—and are a part of a larger and continuing academic investigation.
Final Thoughts

It is clear that within Beliefs of Friends, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip are aware of multiple definitions of latthi and satsana. The first definition places both terms on a hierarchy. Latthi, lower than satsana, is used as a mild pejorative. This is visible in the comparison between Latthi Lama and the Buddha-Satsana, for instance. The next definition has to do with the question of the creator. In this case, a latthi, like Latthi Christian, has a creator, while a satsana, like Satsana-Confucius, does not.

The third definition is the generic category of “ism,” or religion. Both latthi and satsana can be used in this way. In this case, latthi partially loses its negative connotation and becomes neutral. As the lowest common denominator between both words, it is able to encompass both satsana and latthi as a generic category. This happens frequently throughout the book—most notably in the title. However, latthi does not typically get used as a modifier for all religions. For instance, Sathiankoset and Nakhaprathip never talk about “Latthi Buddha.” This is, instead, the work of satsana. Satsana, as a generic category, functions more like the English word “religion.” Like latthi, it can be used as an independent descriptor of a category. However, satsana can also be used as a description of an “ism”—for instance, “Satsana Muslim.” This second definition very rarely gets used in Beliefs of Friends—the closest being Sathiankoset’s introduction to the 1957 edition. This is one of the major differences between them and other Thai scholars who had come before them, like Mongkut or Chulalongkorn, who invoked this definition quite frequently.

Another important difference between their work and that of previous Thai religious scholars is that Beliefs of Friends is not aimed at a European audience. When Sathiankoset
and Nakhapraphip do engage in apologetics, it is not to defend Buddhism from Christianity, but the Hinayana from the Mahayana. The greatest irony of this, of course, is that simply by appropriating the term “Hinayana,” they are necessarily going to have to enter into this sort of antagonistic relationship. This friction, however, creates something even larger: a Buddhist solidarity. Through all the strangeness and differences, people in Tibet, China, and Thailand all have a religion, an “ism,” in common.

A second concept that they are helping to forge is that of a Thainess. This Thainess does not seem to be dependant on a geographic/political understanding of nation since, after all, Chinese friends are close enough that it is possible to see them frequently and ask questions of them. Instead, when discussing Chinese friends, Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip make a point of talking to their readers as if we (the authors and the readers) were all bounded by a single language and a single religion. However, this Thainess in Beliefs of Friends is not being delineated by political borders that are part of a secular, material world. Instead, it seems that this sense of Thainess is partially defined by a spiritual identity that encompasses “religion”—including both latthi and satsana. For Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip, then, to be Thai is to be publicly religious on a world stage.

It is this same world stage that helped to bring about the modern product that is Beliefs of Friends. The comparative satsana that they practice is the product of two different modern concepts from two different parts of the globe: comparative religion and satsana. However, while comparative religion presents itself as a rational science—and even satsana is starting to be seen in a very rational way—comparative satsana as Sathiankoset and Nakhapraphip practice it is more untamed. In the footsteps of Brother Hilaire, they are not aiming to judge, but simply to get a good taste of various religions. While they incorporate
the rational discussions of many European scholars throughout the book, they also bring elements such as fiction into their discussion of religion.

This thesis has been an exploration of the contours of religion in Thailand, as discussed in this one work by Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip. The difficulty for them was not coming up with facts or information—they had European scholars to help them with that—but transforming a previously familiar concept, the satsana, to fit into the complex relationships of world religion, namely, a satsana, or a latthi. Especially since Beliefs of Friends was written at a pivotal time in Thai history, it is useful to see how these men, who had strong ties to the Thai court, were describing both their own religion and the religions of people around them.

In looking at a few key words within one book, it is not possible to extrapolate an entire historical linguistic model. This book is simply a point on a much larger timeline of the development of the language and categories of religion in Thailand. A deep understanding of this one point, though, allows us to hear Sathiankoset and Nakhapratip, as humanized agents, clearly voice their own opinions on religion as an emerging world phenomenon.
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295 Any headings present here which are not present in the 1971 Table of Contents of Beliefs of Friends I have put in italics. These headings are taken either from the body of the text, or from the Table of Contents from the 1957 edition. I have added page numbers (in reference to the 1971 edition) when possible.
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And the Nikayas

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\(^{304}\) P: Paṭhama Sangayana. The Pali names (Dutiya, Tatiya) for the councils are used consistently through this section.

\(^{305}\) T, P: hetu

\(^{306}\) T: chat kusan, S: jāti-kuśāna

\(^{307}\) T: samai, P: samaya

\(^{308}\) T: latthi-tham, P: laddhi-dhamma

\(^{309}\) T: phra khamphi, P: gambhīra

\(^{310}\) P: atītahakatha
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311 T: khana-song, P: gana-sangha  
312 T: achiva, P: ajiva  
313 T: laksana pokkho’ng lama—lama thi avatan  
314 T: wat  
315 P: vihara  
316 T: satanahi saksit, S: šakdi-siddhi  
317 T: cao phi lae phut phi  
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\textsuperscript{319} Sen means to wai or to anjali. The ceremony involves giving food etc. to honor a spirit.
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