

Tracing the roots and meaningfulness of the Sang Sin Xay Legend – A literature review article



© Sinxay in battle, photo of mural at Wat Chaisri, Isan Province, Thailand by G. Brundage, April 24, 2022

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UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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Background of the Sinxay Legend

The most respected and authoritative scholar of Lao history and culture, Mahasila Viravong, wrote in 1953 that there are three masterpieces of Lao literature. The first was *Vetsantrasadok*, the story of Buddha's life immediately preceding his life as the Buddha... Second, the unfinished *poem of Sang Sin Xay* written by the poet Pang Kham in the 16th century, and the third, *Thao Hung* or

Cheuang, a mysterious work known in northern Laos and northeastern Thailand...

Chemberlen, James (1989-1990). "Thao Hung or Cheuang: Tai Epic Poem" (PDF) . *Mon-Khmer Studies* (18–19): 14 . Retrieved 12 September 2014 Entsiklopediya site:uz.wikisko.ru

<http://sealang.net/sala/archives/pdf8/chamberlain1989-1990thao.pdf>

Below is a book review of a popular translation available on Amazon.com, and other popular book outlets. Sinxay was a prince, one of nine sons of the great King Phanya Kousarat...

Sinxay: Renaissance of a Lao-Thai Epic Hero by Peter Whittlesey (Goodreads Author), Baythong Whittlesey

Sinxay: Renaissance of a Lao-Thai Epic Hero brings to Western readers a time-honored, legendary, 17th-century story of gallant virtue and astonishing acts of selfless bravery. This is courageously exemplified by Sinxay, born holding a bow, arrows, and a sword.

The retelling of Sinxay is followed by an additional four scholarly chapters explaining the history, literature, religion, and geographical locations associated with Sinxay. Although not an academic book, the authors careful discussion of the Buddhist framing of the text and its literary, artistic and cultural impact, combined with vivid and plentiful illustrations, results in a book of real interest to scholars and students as well to the general reader.

In this updated translation of a Lao-Thai classic, Sinxay sets out on a harrowing journey to liberate Soumountha, beloved sister of his father, Phanya (King) Kousarat. Soumountha, her grace and virtue surpassing those of any other woman in the Pengchan kingdom, is abducted at the beginning of the story by an ogre king named Koumphan, with extraordinary powers from a distant kingdom.

Kousarat is devastated. Deciding temporarily to renounce the throne, he becomes a Buddhist monk, feeling the need to calm his mind. Once achieving equanimity, he leaves the kingdom to search for his sister. On his journey and during morning alms in a faraway city, he meets seven beautiful sisters, who later become his wives. The youngest sister, Loun, and his first Queen Chanta, pray to the god Indra, who hears their prayers and chooses three of his sons to go to Earth. Loun gives birth to twins: Sangthong, who has the body of a conch shell, and Sinxay, who is born holding a sword, bow, and

arrows. Chanta gives birth to Siho, with the body of a lion and the head of an elephant. Loun's six sisters give birth to normal-looking sons.

Loun and Chanta and their sons are banished from the palace because of the babies' strange appearance. Indra, seeing their hardships while trying to struggle to survive in the forest, builds a small palace for them where the three brothers grow in strength and splendor.

Meanwhile, Sinxay's six half-brothers grow up in the palace, deceitful and dishonest. After Kousarat requests they rescue Soumountha, the six brothers leave the palace, and after many misadventures, eventually meet Sinxay. It's then they trick him into believing the king chose Sinxay to be the one to rescue Soumountha. Embarking on an arduous quest, Sinxay eventually rescues her. This leads to two battles against the ogres, and in the second battle Koumphan is killed.

As they are returning to the king's palace, Sinxay's six brothers push him over a waterfall, eager to take sole credit for rescuing Soumountha. But unknown to all, Indra descends from the heavens and brings Sinxay back to life.

The king eventually learns the truth and the six brothers are put in jail. The king leaves to search for Sinxay, and after being reunited, Sinxay returns to become king. Shortly thereafter the heavenly ogre king descends to earth and brings Koumphan back to life. Still full of rage, Koumphan travels to Pengchan and abducts Soumountha, and Sinxay.

When Indra sees what has taken place, he descends and counsels Koumphan. Koumphan's anger finally dissipates and he agrees to ask for Soumountha's hand in marriage. Accepting his proposal, they marry, and Koumphan builds a saphanthong, a golden bridge connecting the two kingdoms, a symbol of alliance.

This review is from: *Sinxay: Renaissance of a Lao-Thai Epic Hero* (Perfect Paperback)

https://www.amazon.com/Sinxay-Renaissance-Lao-Thai-Epic-Hero/dp/0996299025/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1474344411&sr=8-1&keywords=sinxay

An Analysis of Buddhist Ethics in Synshai Literature, by Sowit Bamrungphak, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Khonkaen campus, Thailand *

The purposes of the study were 1) to study the problems of ethics and well-related practice in Synshai Literature, 2) to study the Buddhist ethics in Synshai Literature, and 3) to analyze the considerable standard and ethical objectives of Synshai Literature. This study was documentary research in which the data collection was by studying the **Palm-leaf manuscripts 2016**¹ of Synshai Literature of Khon Kaen Synshai Literature transcribed by Mr. Bunkirt Phimvaramethakul and colleagues, and secondary data was by other Synshai manuscripts. The research method was logical consider and analysis, synthesis of all data for new knowledge, and used

Descriptive Analysis to present the research result

The research results were found that an ethical problem in Synshai literature involved with stealing, getting married with many wives, using black magic, and committing adultery. Well-related practice among people was divided into two levels: a domestic level and a relative level. To describe such an ethical problem depended upon Buddhist ethics which was Buddhist knowledge dealt with desirable behavior or manners that people should follow under the standard of Five Precepts. A morality of precept or Dhamma of precept and Buddhist morality consisted of suffering, sexual craving, and previous action under the moral standard of Ten Virtues of the King, and Eightfold Noble Path. The Buddhist doctrine for national management under the standard of ethics stated to the desirable and undesirable ethics.

The standard of ethics consideration was divided into two types: 1) the standard relating to Buddhism, i.e., an intention or a purpose to make things wholesome or unwholesome according to moral laws, and 2) the associated standard or the inferior standard which was dealt with conscience principle, what is good or bad, knowing what should behave, and experienced persons' resolution referring to a brainy person in governing the expression of people in community. The purpose of action in Synshai Literature was to close the gap between a person and associated people and be adorable of a mother, a father, a son and a daughter, and so on...

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¹ <https://iif.crossasia.org/s/dllm>

<http://www.ojs.mcu.ac.th/index.php/JIBS/article/view/1665>

www.ojs.mcu.ac.th/index.php/JIBS/article/download/1665/1386

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