

Camadevi Worship: Legend Reproduction and Social Space Construction¹

Warisara Anantato²

Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Abstract

Recently in Thailand, the story of Queen Camadevi has been revived and remembered in several provinces. Queen Camadevi, who is a legendary heroine, ruled the Haripunjaya Kingdom during the 7th-8th centuries, and some provinces regularly observe “Camadevi worship” ceremony today. Historically, Thai people have recognized Queen Camadevi as the Queen of Haripunjaya, an ancient kingdom situated in Lamphun province in northern Thailand. Interestingly, only a few years ago, there has been a phenomenon of several other provinces also beginning to hold “Camadevi Worship” ceremonies, namely Chiang Mai, Phrae, Nan and even Lopburi in central Thailand. The local people living in these provinces explain that their province also has a unique relationship with the queen and are mentioned in the Camadevi Chronicle, particularly regarding Queen Camadevi’s journey from Lopburi to rule the Haripunjaya Kingdom in Lamphun.

This research aims to study the reproduction of the Camadevi legend to construct “Camadevi Worship” ceremonies in the context of contemporary Thai society.

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² PhD candidate, Department of Thai, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

It will analyze the thinking process underlying the construction of the ceremonies, as well as how social space is created through the “Camadevi Worship” ceremony. Primary research findings reveal that the construction of a “Camadevi Worship” Ceremony in each province has undergone a similar thinking process – that is, by selecting a certain part of the Camadevi Chronicle that mentions the names of the communities visited by Queen Camadevi along the journey to the Haripunjaya Kingdom. A “Camadevi Worship” ceremony is then considered as a means to create “social space” for each mentioned community, thus making the space become more sacred and more socially important. This also has made the people well aware of their shared memory relating to Queen Camadevi. In addition, the “Camadevi Worship” ceremony has helped create a sense of pride for the people as being “descendants” of an old community with a strong identity with Queen Camadevi, a legendary heroic leader.

Introduction

Queen Camadevi is a legendary heroine based on the Camadevi Chronicle. According to Queen Camadevi’s life history, her province of birth was Lopburi in central Thailand. Later she was invited to go to rule the Haripunjaya Kingdom in Lamphun in the northern region. However, it was only in the past three decades that a statue of Queen Camadevi was constructed in Lamphun to serve the policy of the Ministry of Interior to establish the heroine as the identity of the province.

Interestingly, at the present time, several provinces in Thailand (including Lamphun) hold “Camadevi worship” ceremonies (พิธีบวงสรวงพระนางจามเทวี) in their provinces by claiming that their province was along the path of her journey from Lopburi to Lamphun. Therefore, it has become a phenomenon today that several provinces have created

narratives in order to revitalize their glorious past and to develop the community's sense of unity and pride, as well as to respond to the country's tourism policy. Among these provinces are Lamphun, Lopburi, Chiang Mai, Phrae and Nan.

In Lamphun, there are a number of communities that organize the "Camadevi Worship" ceremony. For example: "Camadevi's Descendant Club" organizes three worship ceremonies annually, i.e., Camadevi's Birthday Ceremony on the 10th day of the 10th waning moon according to the day when Camadevi Monument was first erected; Camadevi Memorial Ceremony on the 8th day of the 9th waxing moon; and an annual ceremony organized to honor Camadevi and to sprinkle water onto the statue of Khuba Sri Wichai and Camadevi Kut Ku Pagoda. Wat Koh Klang community also organizes a Camadevi Worship ceremony annually on February 15, similar to Nong Du-Pa Sang Community's ceremony in February.

Recently, in Lopburi, there has been a "Camadevi Worship" ceremony held on April 13 at Wat Bang Phung. In Chiang Mai, a "Camadevi Worship" ceremony is held at the same time with Phra That's Water Sprinkling Ceremony at Wat Phra That Doi Khum on the 8th day of the 8th northern waxing moon or the 6th waxing moon in the central region. The ceremony at Wat Phra That Doi Khum first took place in 1995. Similarly, a ceremony is held at Wat Lavo, Amphoe Hang Dong on the 8th day of the 9th waning moon. In Phrae province, the government sector in Tambon Huay Ore, together with Wat Sri Don Kham, holds the ceremony to pay homage to Camadevi at the same time as Loy Krathong Festival and a ceremony to pay homage to Phra That Huay Ore in November. The ceremony was first introduced in 2009. In Nan province, there is also a ceremony to worship Camadevi called "Wat Phya Wat Camadevi Worship Ceremony".

Each community in each province uses quite a similar strategy to refer to the Queen Camadevi legend by claiming a close relationship between Queen Camadevi and the community and its people. For example, the wealthy Inta, Camadevi's father, is mentioned in the Wat Koh Klang legend, as well as the hermit Sudeva, a local resident who raised Camadevi, as recorded in the Wat Phra That Doi Kham legend. Wat Lavo also cites Princess Kessavadi, Camadevi's governess who

used to rule Wiang Lavo, in order to confirm how old the community is. In addition, Wat Bang Phung legend mentions Prince Ramraj, who was Camadevi's consort.

Interestingly, Wat Koh Klang's and Wat Nong Du's legends mention that Queen Camadevi was an ethnic Mon, just like the people living in that area. It can be said that this strategy is intended to show how much closer they are to Queen Camadevi than other communities.

Additionally, some communities have created their worship ritual scripts differently when compared to other communities. It can be said that this strategy has been used to present their identity as being different from others and to create their social space as the community most closely related to Camadevi. For example, Wat Lavo created its Camadevi worship words entitled "The Incantation of the Queen Who Ruled the Town". Wat Phya Wat in Nan added the words "Nanthaburi" to the worship ritual script. Wat Bang Phung changed the name of the town where Camadevi ruled from "Hariphunchai" to "Lavapura".

Based on the above findings, it can be remarked that the belief or the ceremonies not only signify the community's respect for Queen Camadevi, but that "Camadevi Worship" should be perceived as an invented tradition through the reproduction of the old legends with new purposes. This reconstruction was undertaken through ritual elements. The reconstructed legends and rituals help build historical awareness related to ethnicity and social space.

Thus, the researcher is interested in investigating the aims of these rituals and the thinking process underlying them, as well as the elements of the rituals leading to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the belief and the ceremony concerning Queen Camadevi in the context of a changing, contemporary Thai society.

The scope of this study focuses on the "Camadevi Worship" ceremonies taking place in the following provinces:

Lamphun Province

1. "Camadevi Worship" ceremony on her birthday held on the 10th day of the 10th waning moon.
2. "Camadevi Worship" ceremony on the day she passed away held on the 8th day of the 9th waxing moon.

3. “Camadevi Worship” to honor Camadevi and the Kru Ba Sri Wichai Statue Water Sprinkling Ceremony and the Camadevi Kut Ku Pagoda Water Sprinkling Ceremony organized by Camadevi’s Descendant Club in collaboration with Lamphun District Council.

4. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony and the Annual Winter Fair organized by Lamphun Province.

5. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony organized by the Mon people in February at Wat Nong Du.

6. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony organized by Wat Koh Klang in February.

Chiang Mai Province

7. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony and the Phra That Water Sprinkling Ceremony on the 8th day of the 8th waning moon at Wat Phra That Doi Kham.

8. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony and the Phra That Water Sprinkling Ceremony on the 8th day of the 9th waning moon at Wat Lavo, Amphoe Hang Dong.

Phrae

9. A Ceremony to Pay Homage to Camadevi, Lanna Loy Krathong Festival, a Ceremony to Pay Homage to Phra That Huay Ore in November.

Nan Province

10. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony and Five-Moon Tradition on the Full Moon of the 5th month (February to March).

Lopburi Province

11. “Camadevi Worship” ceremony in April at Wat Bang Phung, Amphoe Ban Mi.

Queen Camadevi Worship: The Reasoning Process Underlying Construction of the Worship

At present, there are many displays of faith in Queen Camadevi that are echoed through various pieces of folklore. It is not just the legends that make Queen Camadevi a central image in the rituals, as shown in following message: “Social membership used the legends to explain why the rituals should be. The legends are abstract while the rituals are substantial.”³

Five provinces have been selected for collecting information about the Queen Camadevi rituals. The research criteria for selecting data did not include the use of data from individual worshippers or participants, but rather data from institutions or community level groupings. These reflect the background and reasoning processes giving rise to the ceremony in each location. The researcher surveyed the legendary Queen Camadevi’s provinces by inquiring and interviewing various subjects, including monks, chief executive of the district, community leaders and residents. The results show that there are five provinces – Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan and Lopburi. The main purposes for the ceremonies are to preserve local cultural existence and to express gratitude to Queen Camadevi. The common issue in the creation of Queen Camadevi worship in each location is how to choose the legendary narratives on which to base the rituals.

Building or choosing the narrative in each location reflects the collective thinking in that location. That is, the attempt to build a meaningful rite and to construct a legend which relates legitimately to the community’s past are both extra to the inclusion of sacredness and local antiquity in the new ceremony. The strategies appear to be very similar between locations – that is, to recall the closeness of the area to Queen Camadevi and its people. For example, Wat Koh Klang emphasizes that Queen Camadevi’s father was a millionaire named Inta. Wat Phra That Doi Khum remembers that the hermit Su Dheva took care of her. Wat Lavo recalls that the princess Ket Wadi, the queen’s mentor, took care of this temple. Queen Camadevi’s son built a pagoda at Wat Phra That Doi Kham to house Buddha relics.

³ Siraporn, *Folklore Theory in Urban Legends and Tales Analysis*, 322

To confirm the authenticity of the historic property, Wat Bang Phung speaks of Prince Ram Raja, her husband. This is summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Selecting the legend for reference

Area	Selecting the legend for reference
Wat Koh Klang and Mon community of Wat Nong Du, Lamphun	Queen Camadevi was Mon. Her father was a Mon millionaire named Inta.
Wat Phra That Doi Khum	Queen Camadevi's son built a pagoda at Wat Phra That Doi Kham to house Buddha relics.
Wat Lavo	Queen Camadevi built this temple by bringing a Buddha image from Lavo. The princess Ket Wadi, her mentor and the wife of King Anantayot, Queen Camadevi's son, took care of this temple.
Wat Phra That Sri Don Khum	Queen Camadevi brought Buddha relics (the breast bone) to Wat Phra That Sri Don Khum.
Wat Phaya Wat	Queen Camadevi brought Buddha relics to this temple.
Wat Bang Phung	The former palace of Queen Camadevi and Prince Ram Raja, her husband.
Organized by Lamphun and the Queen Camadevi's descendants club	A land / kingdom of Queen Camadevi.

From the table, the concept of creating a ritual worship of Queen Camadevi may be seen. Every social space picks up the legendary Queen Camadevi to create a ritual, namely: Lopburi refers to Queen Camadevi and her husband building the palace together, which became Wat Bang Phung in the present; Lumphun refers to Queen Camadevi being a Mon ancestor with suggested evidence of Wat Koh Klang built by her father; and Wat Lavo refers to Queen Camadevi being the same race as Lavo people and she built Lavo city. At present, Wat Lavo organizes a worship ritual of Queen Camadevi and a Water

Pouring Ceremony for Buddha Relics. This is a Lanna tradition from the past, similar to Wat Phra That Doi Khum where worship of Queen Camadevi and the Buddha Relics Water-Pouring Ceremonies are held together.

Queen Camadevi Worship and Creating Social Space

The researcher has already proposed the selection of legend elements to construct the rite of Queen Camadevi worship in each community in order to build a memorial for people inside and outside the community for a variety of purposes. The researcher will now discuss how each locality creates their social space around the “Queen Camadevi worship ritual”.

Queen Camadevi Worship Shows the Cultural Identity of Social Space in the Context of Tourism.

The legends and rituals of Queen Camadevi worship occupy significant roles in creating provincial or local identity. This causes pride in local identities as “owners” or as relating to Queen Camadevi, and the one who used to rule the Hariphunchai Kingdom.

The identity of Lamphun province is reproduced through the legend of Queen Camadevi by using cultural capital in many forms, such as sacred objects, monuments and idols of Queen Camadevi, and the placing of these into temples or other places associated with Queen Camadevi creating a provincial tradition of the queen worship.

Lamphun has an advantage over other provinces in terms of “physical areas” to accommodate the legendary support with a stable belief and faith in Queen Camadevi. It is easy to reproduce the legend to have life again since Lamphun has a collective memory in the community that has become the provincial identity.

The new tradition also creates memories for people outside the community. We may conclude that the identity of Lamphun is Queen Camadevi who is the owner and who informs “other people” to know that Lamphun belongs precisely to Queen Camadevi.

Lamphun province informs outside people by using provincial cultural capital. Most evident is the creation of Queen Camadevi as

a substantial image for the worship ceremony under the title: “Queen Camadevi worship and Lamphun winter fair”.

The interesting activities are in the morning the Lamphun governor and the chief officers worship at the Queen Camadevi monument. In the evening, there is a parade of “Miss Lumphun” contestants, a procession and simulation display of Queen Camadevi coming from Lopburi to Lamphun to rule the city. Also in the procession, various villagers and ethnic groups which live in Lamphun are included, such as Thai Lue and Mon. Later, the Lamphun governor presides over the opening ceremony by placing a floral worship tray in front of the model at Lamphun Stadium. The purpose of Queen Camadevi worship and Lamphun winter fair is to honor the Queen Camadevi Genesis Heroines Lamphun. She established Hariphunchai kingdom more than 1,300 years ago. This activity also celebrates the birthday of King Rama IX on 5 December.



Figure 1: Queen Camadevi worship and Lamphun winter fair
Photo by: Warisara Anantato taken on 4 December 2015.

In a similar way, the fair of “Wai Sa Pa Ra Mi Queen Camadevi”, the Yi Peng float tradition of Lanna respecting Chao Huay Or relics are organized at Long District, Phrae Province. These activities are organized by the municipality and Wat Phra Sri Don Khum to combine the Queen Camadevi worship ceremony and the Yi Peng float tradition on 8 to 10 November of every year.

Creating the Queen Camadevi worship at Wat Phra Sri Don Khum probably reflects people’s thinking that the queen brought the Buddha relics to rest here. In addition, the name of Long District where Wat Phra Sri Don Khum is located should be noted. It is said that here Queen Camadevi lost her way to Haripunchai and she said “*long* (try[ลอง])” then Long District has carried that name ever since. The combination of Queen Camadevi worship with Yi Peng floats has produced great and elegant rituals that have been easily and fully accepted by the local people. Moreover, these activities support tourism and are consistent with the objectives to create and maintain Lanna traditions, together with promoting tourism of Long District, including the retro legend of Queen Camadevi and Long District.

In this event, there is a light, color and sound performance in “the retro legend of Queen Camadevi and Long District”. There are Lanna cultural performances, Lanna lanterns, respecting Chao Huay Or relics, and competition of a Kua Tan parade of Wat Phra Sri Don Khum. All these activities support tourism. The strategy of selecting elements of the legend of Queen Camadevi to create a fair that is interesting and unique to the locality has enabled an event full of ancient legendary narrative, holiness in district history and association with the Buddha. Queen Camadevi is respected and famous as an important heroine of Lanna and of the locality where everyone is familiar with her. This gives Wat Phra Sri Don Khum in Long District the role of an ancient city and, together with Queen Camadevi legend, are also contemporary as the area of the Buddha’s relics, as well as Cho-Hare relics, famous in Phrae Province.



Figure 2: A Ceremony to Pay Homage to Camadevi,
Lanna Loy Krathong Festival at Phrae.

Photo by: Warisara Anantato taken on 23 November 2015.

These activities “Wai Sa Pa Ra Mi Queen Camadevi”, “Lanna Yi Peng float” and “venerating Chao Huay Or relics” are most fascinating and fit well with cultural tourism.

This has a similar dynamic in Lamphun in 2556. In the past, the Buddha and Queen Camadevi were worshipped and venerated with offerings using traditional lanterns. Today, these objectives are served by the fair to promote the cultural arts and local traditions and to support the principle of collective activity where communities and the public from every region participate. In addition, the Council requests the cooperation of local people to dress traditionally and decorate their homes with entrance archways using forest materials to impress the tourists.

Interestingly, the original Lanna Thai Loy Krathong ceremony does not include worship of Queen Camadevi. There was only a ceremony to honor the Buddha in the temple. But presently in some localities, the above tradition has been redefined to include Queen Camadevi lamp worship, thus raising the tourism value with references to the chronicles of Queen Camadevi and also highlighting

Lanna cultural traditions. The construction of a rite surrounding the veneration of the Buddha relics and the worship of Queen Camadevi have served to build and enhance local pride.

From the perspective of seizing social spaces, the reader will see that both events – worshipping Queen Camadevi and the winter fair in Lamphun province, and Wai Sa Queen Camadevi with venerating Huay Or relics at Long district in Phrae province – have the same objectives – to honor the Queen and to promote tourism. Both provinces want society to accept their identity and cultural capital ownership. On the other hand, if an area does not have enough resources to compete, it can negotiate to share the social space with other localities by contributing their own specific narrative of the Queen Camadevi chronicle.

Queen Camadevi Worship Is Used to Express Ethnic Identity

In the field survey, the researcher found that Mon people in Lamphun worship Queen Camadevi. They live in Tambol Ban Reuan, Pa Sang District, Lamphun Province. They are divided into two groups: Ban Mon Nong Du and Ban Mon Bor Khaw. Previously, Ban Bor Khaw was a part of Ban Nong Du until 1989 when the government separated Ban Bor Khaw to be another village. This was to make it easier to allocate local budgets. The Queen Camadevi worship is organized by two groups of Mon people who make two ceremonies together.

Mon Nong Du organizes the Queen Camadevi worship before the end of the 4th month in the north (February) which is around January or February of every year. They believe that it is a sacred and appropriate time to do the ritual. From an interview with Khun Thawatch Duangsombut, an important person in relation to the construction of the Queen Camadevi Worship Ceremony, the ceremony was held the first time in 1982 and that year was also the first celebration of the unveiling of the Queen Camadevi monument.⁴ At that time, the province invited Ban Nong Du Mon to prepare a welcome parade for a Queen Camadevi figurine to be enshrined

⁴ Thawatch Duangsombut, interview, 20 February 2016

in Lamphun also for the first time. Since that time, the Nong Du Mon must organize the Queen Camadevi Worship Ceremony at the monument in the public flower garden every year.

From the time Ban Bor Khaw was separated from Ban Nong Du in 1989, Phra Auaychai (the abbot of Wat Koh Klang in those days) had an idea to look for a spiritual center for Ban Bor Khaw people. He created a statue of Queen Camadevi so the villagers did not to have to come in town to worship at the Queen Camadevi Royal Plaza monument at Nong Dok Public Park in Lamphun. Phra Auaychai prayed to Queen Camadevi about building the statue and then he said that Queen Camadevi spoke into his heart saying: "I would like to go back home." He began to buy the land of the villagers' in front of the temple. In 2007, he came across a Queen Camadevi picture in the image of a priest from Devi Sri Sanphet (Nun). In 2008, the Queen Camadevi worship rite took place for the first time with budget support from the Sub-district Administrative Office. Since then, they have worshipped annually on February 14, which, they believe, is the birthday of Queen Camadevi.⁵

Both Mon ethnic groups in Lamphun have a community collective memory of the Queen Camadevi local legend that she was an ethnic Mon. They said that she was a daughter of a wealthy man named Inta, a Ban Nong Du Mon in Lamphun province. He established the Queen Camadevi worship tradition that now overlaps with the public ceremony arranged by the government. The worship ceremony involves symbols showing Mon ethnicity, including the food, costumes and dances.

However, the two Mon groups in Lamphun have different practices for Queen Camadevi worship. Ban Nong Du Mon show Mon identity through the Queen Camadevi worship more than Ban Bor Khaw Mon by using Mon language, music, collectively cooking Mon food and a Mon flag parade to the Queen monument; while Ban Bor Khaw presents a more moderate Mon identity than Ban Nong Du Mon. The latter choose to emphasize their identity through the worship rite in order to show their authority and increase their

⁵ Auaychai Prateepthong, interview, 15 February 2014

bargaining position with the government. They do not receive any financial support for these activities. All of the money for the rituals is derived from contributions of people in their village. This is different from Ban Bor Khaw Mon and Wat Koh Klang that are fully supported by the government because the area around the village is believed to be a historic site, and the millionaire Inta who was the queen's father built and stayed on what is now Wat Koh Klang land. This place has become a sacred site and has attracted increased interest from the government over the Mon village of Nong Du. An aspect that shows the government cooperation is that the hosts jointly organize the Queen Camadevi worship and government takes part in the event. This involvement makes the Wat Koh Klang ceremony seem more like a government activity rather than a Mon activity because the Mon identity is not clearly presented in the activities. This dynamic is reinforced by inviting a Brahman to programme the ceremony, and a government officer to open it.



Figure 3: Wat Koh Klang

Photo by: Warisara Anantato taken on 14 February 2016.

It may be said that the Queen Camadevi worship is a way for the ethnic Mon to create a social space for themselves. There are two dimensions. The first is the collective actions to use the Queen Camadevi worship ceremony to construct a Mon social space by highlighting the legend element that the queen was an ethnic Mon. Ban Mon Nong Du and Ban Mon Bor Khaw attempt to emphasize to society that the queen was Mon, which is a minority grouping in Lamphun, perhaps in order to protect themselves from thinking or feeling that they are strangers among the majority. Another perspective is that they can show the superiority of their group being the same ethnicity as Queen Camadevi, as well as Queen Camadevi being the ruler of the Hariphunchai kingdom, which is honored by various ethnic groups in the province.

Reference to historical figures above is similar to making a connection with the history of the indigenous people in the midst of the main group in order to show their ancient history and origins. This helps make them confident in living and reduces their differences with the majority group at a historical site.

The second dimension is regarding the government's budget allocation, which has both those who benefit and those who do not. The ceremony thus symbolizes a reaction towards the government by those who are not beneficiaries and a symbol of self-reliance to those who do not depend on the government to organize it.

Queen Camadevi Worship Helps Create Local Awareness of History

The field researcher found that many social spaces selected elements of the legend of Queen Camadevi to support their local history. One of the processes that help people understand their local history is to construct ceremonies that give understanding of the past through constructing rituals around stories, legends and chronicles. Even if these are not all from the past, the belief is that such material can build meaning for the local people by inclusion in the ceremonies. Therefore, it can be said that elements of the legend of Queen Camadevi that are applied locally are brought together to be tools to convey meaning to life and to give rise to ceremonies and rituals. This

is social action to build local identity, resulting in the people taking pride in their community and being ready to uphold the meanings that have been recalled so that the community will be strong into the future. This comes from all sections of the community cooperating, but the people with the most influence in the process are the Buddhist monks who are the spiritual heart of the village people. Examples of their influence can be found at the Queen Camadevi worship at Wat Phra That Doi Khum, Wat Lavo in Chiang Mai, Wat Phaya Wat in Nan, and Wat Bang Phung in Lopburi province. These monks have many important roles and one of these is as chairman of the event. In interviewing these monks and their followers it was found that they believe that they are related with Queen Camadevi in some manner in the past. They might have been the Queen Camadevi's teachers or soldiers. This makes many people come to the worship such that it has become a district ceremony. Cooperation among all community groups is at a high level. All this comes from faith and belief in the "monks". So participating in the rites is symbolic of meeting Queen Camadevi once more by means of fundamental thinking, preaching to build faith and a promise prayer together to meet each other again. For example, the interview with Wat Koh Klang Abbot said that everything is created by making a prayerful wish to Queen Camadevi.⁶

It can be seen that the ritual worship of Queen Camadevi has been created from the belief in rebirth (cycle of existence, birth-death) that show how relationships are built between belief that fills the role of constructing the rituals. Central to this role is the role of cooperation between community groups, which gives rise to certain patterns of thought or to collective behavior.

Rituals can attract and stretch the people's thinking to move in one direction. In the world of rituals, ceremony participants have the same objectives and take on a singleness of mind. As Durkheim said:

The various rituals and symbols of the world of sacred things are a substantial representation of society. In daily life the humans can live without perception to groups but the ritual atmosphere and symbolic ceremony can give them a sense of

⁶ Auaychai Prateepthong, interview, 15 February 2014

unity that descends from their ancestors. They shared the same fate. The sacred world is as virtual as the common world. These look like two sides of the same coin.⁷

Queen Camadevi worship and Buddhism: The Worship of Relics

Creating ritual ceremony to recognize the local history in each area has an interesting aspect, namely the inclusion of local Buddhist traditions. Wat Lavo, Wat Phra That Doi Khum and Wat Phraya Wat selected parts of the Queen Camadevi chronicle to build their worship ceremony, but also combined this with the Buddhist traditions of Lanna. There is a traditional rite of veneration of sacred relics or pouring water for relics every 8 Khum or 9 Khum (period of the waxing or waning moon) in the north of Thailand. To combine the relics rite with the ritual of Queen Camadevi worship likely stems from the idea that she was a part of that locality where she built such places as Wat Lavo and Wat Phra That Doi Khum where the hermit Su Dheva took care of her.

The study found that the former traditional veneration of relics at the 8th month in the north did not include any important persons in the rituals. Therefore, they said that the Queen Camadevi worship has been placed alongside this sacred relics tradition. This tradition has been built by reference to the former Buddhist tradition of worshipping relics that is a ritual of Lanna.

The period of the 8th waxing moon (north) is a very important Buddhist day – the birthday, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. All Buddhists in the world commemorate the Buddha by offering food to monks, following precepts, listening to sermons, practicing good conduct or meditation. All these practices are usually observed in popular Lanna Thai and it is popular to make merit at the important temples, i.e., Chiang Mai (Wat Phra that Doi Suthep), Chiang Rai (Phra That Jom Kitti and Phra That Doi Tung), Lamphun (Haripunchai), Lampang (Phra That Lampang Luang), Phrae (Phra that Cho Hae), Nan (Phra That Chae Haeng), and Phayao (Phra Choa Ton Luang Tung

⁷ Emile Durkheim, 1915 referred in Paritta, *Goddess Grandpa Fiddler dancer and Other ritual and dramatic works*, 4.

Aiang), and Mae Hong Son (Phra That Doi Kong Mu). In addition to worshipping at the important city temples, the people also accompany each other to worship relics in chedis or stupas near their home everywhere and in every street in Wan Peng Deuan 8 (the 8th month in the period of the waxing moon) or Wan Peng Deuan 6 in central Thailand.⁸

One can observe that the inclusion of Queen Camadevi, a female in worship with the Buddhist ceremony, reflects the sacredness of the female gender in the ritual. This is perhaps due to the image representing the Queen Camadevi that came from the selection and building of the legend through a Buddhist missionary and Queen Camadevi herself who was a good Buddhist. She built many worship places and one can see the train of thought in lifting up her name in the Buddhist ceremonies as an important person in local history. Additionally, one can see the way the queen is revered by placing her memory alongside the sacred relics that are also revered. These form a couplet in the mind of the community.



Figure 4: Wat Phraya Wat

Photo by: Warisara Anantato taken on 21 March 2016.

⁸ Manee, *Twelve months of Thai Lanna Tradition*, 102.

The Queen Camadevi Worship and Cultural Traditions: New Year and Songkran Traditions

Manee Payomyong said:

The New Year tradition in Chiang Mai begins in the morning when people offer alms, attend a sermon until the lunch of the monks. After that there are the ceremonies of pouring water to the Buddha idols in the temples, or relics pagoda and temple abbots. In the afternoon, they go to venerate and pour water on ancestors, parents, senior relatives and the important city Buddha idol. After that they go to pour water on Hua Koo which contains the bones of Chiang Mai Governors who made merit for the city.⁹

Lamphun also has a pouring water ceremony of Queen Camadevi and Kru Ba Sriwichai. This activity is organized by Queen Camadevi's descendants club and Lamphun municipality. In addition, Wat Bang Pheung, Lopburi province chooses Thai New Year's Day on April 13. We can see that these two localities have created the Queen Camadevi worship by continuing with the idea of celebrating the old New Year tradition, but enriched by including a historical person, that is, Queen Camadevi, who is respected by community people because she was a heroine who performed many beneficial acts for the people. There is a water pouring ceremony for the queen. This is an innovative tradition fashioned from the old tradition that was simply about honoring a historical figure. But now it has become a social space, a locally-specific tradition that helps to build a cooperative and harmonious community atmosphere among the people living there. Queen Camadevi is the center of the people's heart and soul.

We may conclude that the ceremony reflects the cultural capital selection of monks and community leaders who represent their own ideals. The reader can see that the social space, ritual, legend and community have been fused together to form a single package that has the power to instil a sense of history and meaning to their own lives and the life of the local community. Simultaneously, the status of monks, the temples and community leaders who have joined together in building the ceremony to increase the sense of security and stability.

⁹ Manee, *Twelve months of Thai Lanna Tradition*, 61.

Queen Camadevi Worship and National Traditions

The Queen Camadevi's descendants club in Lampoon cooperates with Lamphun municipality to organize the Queen Camadevi's birthday celebration on the waning moon dated 10th of the 10th month every year and honor the Queen's death anniversary on the waxing moon dated 8th of the 9th month every year. This ceremony takes the form of popular tradition and shows how the government and Thai people respect the Thai monarchy and have a sense of gratitude to Thailand's kings. When the Queen Camadevi's descendants club and the municipality organize the above ceremony, it is made to clearly look official. Therefore, the details of the contrived ceremony appear to be part of the government ceremony, with the governor as chairman, an opening speech, and the few participants are mostly government officials from the community. On the birthday and death ceremonies of the queen, government civil servants from every department offer floral wreaths at the Queen Camadevi monument.



Figure 5: Worship on the queen's death anniversary.
Photo by: Warisara Anantato taken on 22 August 2015.

It can be seen two images emerge of the Queen Camadevi worship. The first image is one of a monarch who ruled the city. In the second image, she is a local heroine who respects and worships the

Buddha. She was a virtuous example of a Buddhist religious leader in her community. The presentation of these images depends on the authority of organizers to choose to present them in accordance with the purpose of rituals.

From all of the above, it can be seen that the social practices of the local people are attempting to build meaning for their locality and their community. This may be called a strategy in response to the nation's history which was written by the central state. Another way of describing this is that the local legend was not randomly chosen by "someone in authority" to add into the national history.

In addition, the field researcher observed that these local communities are in the position of having to answer to the government, yet at the same time they recognize the power of this local government as well. They allow the government to be involved in the activities by jointly hosting activities. The government is invited to preside over the opening. The government is given parts to play and contributes to the spectacle, honor and faith-building capacity of the ceremonies. A final affirmation that the Queen Camadevi worship tradition is not lost from the community, but has a bright and continuing future there, is that the activities are supported by government's budget every year.

Conclusion and Discussion

Research into the Queen Camadevi worship ritual in different localities has highlighted two social factors contributing to the phenomenon of "Queen Camadevi worship" – the cultural policies of the government and social change. Deterioration of cultural norms and the promotion of tourism in the context of capitalism and globalization have caused establishment of traditions to enhance the role of Queen Camadevi at the local level. This confirms Watcharaporn's research who said that "the ritual of Phra Au Pa Khud is a dynamic. The changing details of rituals come from the result of tourism, the role of government and the private sector."¹⁰

The process begins by quoting or selecting specific local folklore information. This is where the belief and faith of community

¹⁰ Watcharaporn, "Phra Upakhut transmission", 2014.

people in legendary Queen Camadevi comes from and is reproduced in various forms. These are then fused with the present by means of ceremonies that produce belief and the legend of Queen Camadevi as a concrete figure, (formalization) to be acted on and, by mindful effort, to set the path towards resting it in an existing tradition. Then the content of the legend is expanded and the Queen Camadevi worship becomes a part of the existing religio-cultural tradition. This gives the old tradition an expanded role, including bearing in a concealed way, a new meaning – that of praise to Queen Camadevi establishing strong patronage in the local area. The contrived ceremony also creates the basis for remembrance by the local people in their own locality to the point where they all remember that they have the same ruler together – Queen Camadevi herself. This helps bring harmony into the community and the remembrance lays the foundation for traditions and rites which have the power to inform outsiders that they are literally the “owners” of Queen Camadevi.

Hobsbawm, *et al*, has proposed that created traditions will build harmony in the community in the matter: “those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities.”¹¹ Therefore, the rituals created from the Queen Camadevi legend have the objective of building reverence for the fact that their locality is a part of the legend because it has been fused with something sacred and both are in the same historical story. Because the legend of Queen Camadevi in each locality explains the origin of their land and its important sites, this means that the legend is not only an account of how something sacred came into existence, but is also an account of the history of each local area as well.

The study shows that the creator groups or organizer groups fall into three categories: 1. Government – municipality, sub district or province; 2. Temples – with the abbot having the most important role; 3. Clubs. Because the members are different from each other, the Queen Camadevi worship ceremony reflected these differences. If the government organizes the rite, the objectives will be to highlight the tourism-friendly features. This is using a ritual of sacred things and

¹¹ Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, 9.

changing it to suit a profane setting. This is repeated in the use of the Queen Camadevi worship ceremony and the winter annual fair in Lamphun province. If mainly monks organize these events, then the worship of Queen Camadevi would be linked to Buddhist traditions, such as pouring water on a Buddha image or relics. If a club organizes the Queen Camadevi worship, they will base it on the state and government officials by inviting the government officers to preside and to open the ceremony.

In addition, some areas may create the Queen Camadevi worship to be different from other groups. They would like to identify and create their own community social space that relates with the queen.

Because of the above issue, implicit belief or ritual worship do not only mean the queen is being honored. Instead, the phenomenon may be viewed as a created tradition from a past story brought forward and modified for a number of reasons depending on the organizers of the ceremony. Objectives may include the perspective of reviving the legend, or building a sense of history and incarnation and fostering meaning for the locality.

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