



Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies)

By Justin Thomas McDaniel

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Winner of the Henry J. Benda Prize sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies

Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words examines modern and premodern Buddhist monastic education traditions in Laos and Thailand. Through five centuries of adaptation and reinterpretation of sacred texts and commentaries, Justin McDaniel traces curricular variations in Buddhist oral and written education that reflect a wide array of community goals and values. He depicts Buddhism as a series of overlapping processes, bringing fresh attention to the continuities of Theravada monastic communities that have endured despite regional and linguistic variations. Incorporating both primary and secondary sources from Thailand and Laos, he examines premodern inscriptional, codicological, anthropological, art historical, ecclesiastical, royal, and French colonial records. By looking at modern sermons, and even television programs and websites, he traces how pedagogical techniques found in premodern palm-leaf manuscripts are pervasive in modern education.

As the first comprehensive study of monastic education in Thailand and Laos, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words* will appeal to a wide audience of scholars and students interested in religious studies, anthropology, social and intellectual history, and pedagogy.

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