

## 山地からみたブンチュム崇拜現象 ——ラフの事例——

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### The Bunchum Worship Movement on the Hills: A Theravadin Charismatic Monk and the Lahu

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#### Abstract

This paper examines the recent development of cross-national and cross-ethnic movement of worshipping Khruba Bunchum, a charismatic Theravada monk who has been working along the Thai-Burmese borderlands, from the viewpoint of the highlanders and their relationship with modern nation states. Khruba Bunchum has become famous among the Lahu on the hills of Thailand and Myanmar since the 1990s when a Lahu “man-god” assisted his meditation. After that some cults of the Lahu joined the Bunchum movement and discovered that he is a reincarnation of the past saints of their prophetic tradition. The Lahu legend narrates that these past saints used miraculous power to defend their theocracies against the modern states of China and Burma. In this context, for the Lahu, the Bunchum movement articulates their longing for redemption of “lost kingdoms.” The Bunchum movement itself also shows some aspects of “state evasion,” in terms that Bunchum has been active outside state control of the Sangha. However, at the same time, from another perspective, the Bunchum movement among the upland minorities is equally viewed as a showcase of Buddhist propagation program initiated by both governments of Thailand and Burma. The nature of the Bunchum movement is still ambivalent, for such contradicting functions of the movement in regard to nation-states are working at the same time and at the same field. However, it is this contradiction which contributes to the multi-dimensional aspect of the Bunchum movement, which has gained a wide range of supporters from both the centers and peripheries of the state.

**Keywords:** Thailand, Myanmar, Buddhism, Lahu, Millenarianism

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