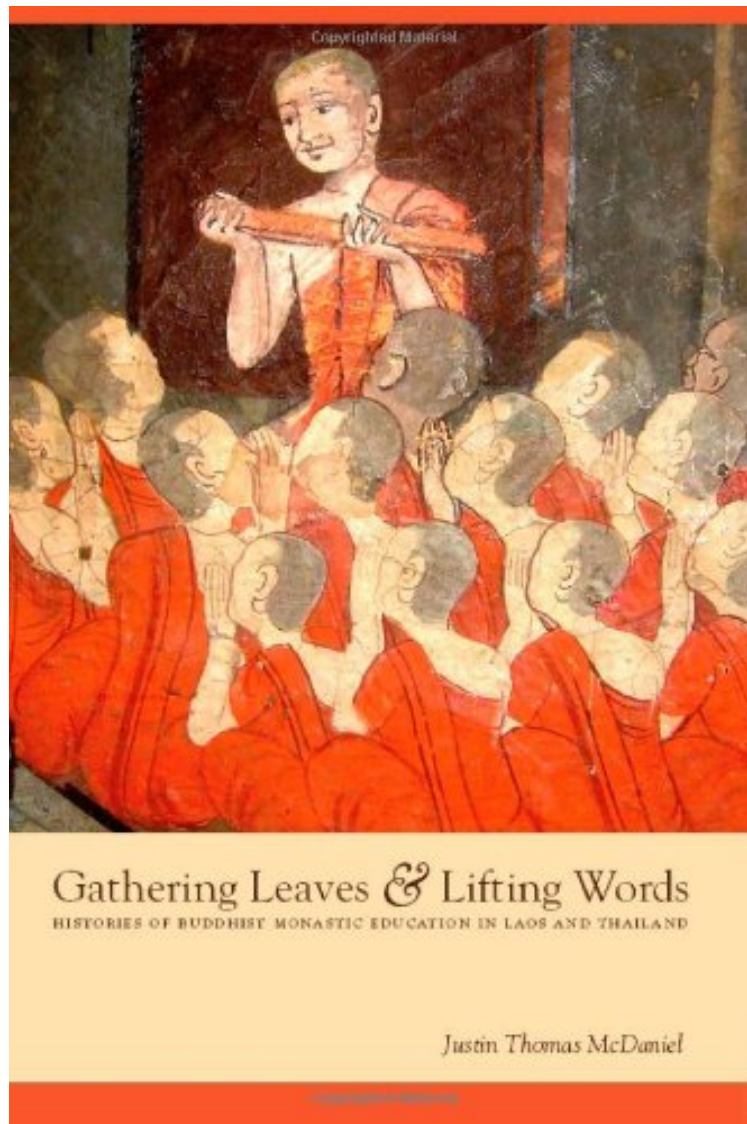


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Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies)

Justin Thomas McDaniel

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Education in Laos and Thailand (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies):

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.

"The book reads very fluidly as McDaniel writes in an unusually clear and straightforward manner. . . . The book will no doubt become essential reading for anyone studying the social history of Thailand and Laos or Theravada Buddhism." Daniel Veidlinger, *History of Religions*, February 2011 "Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words is a rich and often fascinating treatment of Buddhist monastic textual culture and bilingual commentary in the Siamese/Thai/Lao region, reflecting the author's long personal acquaintance with Lao/Thai monastic institutions and educational practices." H-ASIA "With this book, McDaniel, a gifted textual scholar, has produced the first systemic study of how monks have been educated in Southeast Asia over the last five hundred years." Buddhadharma "This book is a gold mine of descriptive information, analysis, and informed speculative inference. It will add substantially to our knowledge of Buddhism in northern Thailand and Laos, monastic education, the relationship between canon and commentary, and, I hope, will promote the study of pedagogical intertextuality, which is at the heart of McDaniel's project." Donald K. Swearer, Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School "This is a brilliant study which will establish McDaniel as the foremost student of the relationship between Buddhist religious texts and the contexts in which they are read, heard, seen, and interpreted." Charles Keyes, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and International Studies, University of Washington From the Publisher "This book is a gold mine of descriptive information, analysis, and informed speculative inference. It will add substantially to our knowledge of Buddhism in northern Thailand and Laos, monastic education, the relationship between canon and commentary, and, I hope, will promote the study of pedagogical intertextuality that is at the heart of McDaniel's project." - Donald K. Swearer, Harvard Divinity School "This is a brilliant study which will establish McDaniel as the foremost student of the relationship between Buddhist religious texts and the contexts in which they are read, heard, seen, and interpreted." - Charles Keyes, University of Washington