"We Love Mr King"

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“We Love Mr King”

Malay Muslims of Southern Thailand in the Wake of the Unrest

Anusorn Unno

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

First published in Singapore in 2019 by
ISEAS Publishing
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614
E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg
Website: <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Anusorn Unno.
"We Love Mr King" : Malay Muslims of Southern Thailand in the Wake of the Unrest.
1. Malays (Asian people) —Thailand, Southern.
2. Sovereignty—Thailand, Southern.
3. Islam and politics—Thailand, Southern.
I. Title.
II. Title: Malay Muslims of Southern Thailand in the Wake of the Unrest.
DS570 M3A63 2019

ISBN 978-981-4818-11-7 (soft cover)
ISBN 978-981-4818-12-4 (ebook, PDF)

Cover photos: Ceremonial footed tray.
Photos courtesy of Anusorn Unno.

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd
Printed in Singapore by Mainland Press Pte Ltd

For all those who have lost their lives
in the southern unrest

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Acknowledgements

This book has emerged out of my long-time research in Thailand's Deep South. It began in 2007 with a Summer Pilot Research Grant I received from the University of Washington's Department of Anthropology, enabling me to travel across the region to assess the feasibility of doing fieldwork amid the unrest and to select a field site for a PhD dissertation. I was able to identify at least three villages that were suitable for the research I sought to conduct. However, the village that struck me as most appropriate was Guba. This is not only because it lends itself to the examination of research questions but more importantly because it possesses necessary conditions for fieldwork — the interlocutors' hospitality and open-mindedness — that make it possible for a Thai Buddhist like me (and the only Thai Buddhist in the village during my sojourn) to carry out a thirteen-month period of fieldwork there. After I graduated and then taught at Thammasat University's Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, I continued to conduct research in Guba from which material in this book was also drawn. I am therefore deeply indebted and thankful to the people of Guba and especially the family with whom I stayed, although I cannot name their real names given the sensitivity of the issues discussed.

I am grateful to my PhD supervisory committee. Celia Lowe, committee chair and also my adviser, not only encouraged me to work on the southern unrest since the beginning of my PhD study but also provided me with relevant theories and ethnography as well as organized dissertation writing workshops in Indonesia. Charles F. Keyes offered his insightful knowledge about Thai society and also introduced me to important works on Thailand's Deep South and Malaysia; he also guided me if he felt that I was pushing an argument too far. Arzoo Osanloo was a real help on subjects related to Islam, and Carlo Bonura was a friendly and thoughtful discussant on southern Thai politics. I also received encouraging comments from Sara R. Curran, an external committee member who has conducted extensive research in northeastern Thailand. Without their help, I could not have finished my dissertation. I am also thankful to the National Science Foundation for the Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant that financially supported my fieldwork in Guba in 2008–09.

For the research projects, I am thankful to the Ministry of Culture's Department of Cultural Promotion for providing me with a grant to study Malay beliefs and rituals in light of Islamic reform in Guba in 2012–13. I am thankful to the Thailand Research Fund, which provided me with a grant to study multiple forms of sovereignty in Guba in 2014–15. In this project, I received insightful comments and suggestions from Chaiwat Sa-tha-anand, who served as the project's mentor and to whom I am thankful.

I received help and support from many people in writing this book. Christopher Joll not only strongly encouraged me to write the book but also provided me with a comprehensive list of scholarly literature on Islam in general and Thailand's Deep South in particular. His book on Muslim merit-making in the southernmost region is extensively used in the book, and I greatly appreciate it. I am thankful to Aryud Yahprung for promptly sending me his dissertation on Islamic reform and revival in southern Thailand. I am grateful to Michael Montesano for his support and encouragement in writing this book. Reviewers' comments and suggestions played a crucial role in transforming my flawed and awkward manuscript into something more presentable. They are really appreciated. I am also thankful to my wife, Chalita Bundhuwong, who spent late nights with me offering support while doing her own work while I was writing this book.

All praise goes to the people of Guba and the aforementioned persons. Any errors contained within are entirely mine.

Anusorn Unno
Bangkok, 6 December 2017

Main "Dramatis Personae" (Alphabetically)

Abidin	New Group practitioner
Aiman	The family's second son, a ritual and cultural specialist
Aryani	Mother of three whose husband was killed in the unrest
Azlan	Chairman of village 1 Red-Whiskered Bulbul club
Daessa	The family's rubber tapper, a member of various state-supported groups
Dahari	Southern Guba mosque committee member
Effendi	Rubber trader, a man of vast connections
Faara	Female schoolchild
Ishak	The family's paternal grandfather, former village 1 headman
Jaafar	A leading ritual specialist or *bomoh*
Jamal	The family's maternal younger brother
Jasim	Burong Kueteetae subdistrict headman, the most influential figure or strongman in Raman and nearby districts
Maeh	The family's mother
Mana	Former village 1 headman, village 1 headman's father-in-law
Meng	Village 1 headman
Mohammed	Arzeulee Subdistrict Administrative Organization village 1 member, a northern Guba mosque committee member
Najmudin	The family's extended member and employee
Nazri	Son of the Imam of northern Guba mosque
Osman	Khru Razak's right-hand man
Qasim	A leading ritual specialist or *bomoh* specializing in exorcism

Saifuldin	The family's oldest son, Arzeulee Subdistrict Administrative Organization deputy chief executive
Shaari	Male schoolchild
Shakib	Arzeulee Subdistrict Administrative Organization chief executive
Talib	Roadside teashop owner, village 2 assistant headman
Tok Zaki	Dakwah leader
Wae	The family's father
Yaakob	Hajj service provider, New Group practitioner
Zaidi	Dakwah practitioner

Introduction

During a hot, breezy afternoon in Guba — a Malay Muslim village in southern Thailand — a schoolchild halted and reoriented a routine conversation at a roadside pavilion by bringing in a decorated, footed tray.[1] The tray had been made for the opening ceremony and parade for Tadika Samphan, an intramural sports game among members of Taman Didikan Kanak Kanak (Tadika)[2] in Raman district of Yala Province. The tray contained tricoloured sticky rice that inscribed a sentence, "เรารักนายหลวง" (*rao rak nay luang*), purposely meant to mean "We love the king". It would not have drawn much attention from those at the pavilion if the word for "king" had been spelled as it should have been. Instead of "ในหลวง" (*nai luang*), "the king" — the most commonly used phrase for designating the Thai monarch[3] — what was inscribed instead was "นายหลวง" (*nay luang*), a term that literally means "Mister Luang" and that, for Thai-speaking people, has nothing to do with the Thai monarch.

After my remarks on the title *nay luang*, the others at the pavilion had various reactions. Some were surprised and said they had never before realized that the *nay* spelling was incorrect, despite the virtual omnipresence of the phrase *rao rak nai luang* nationwide, especially after state-supported campaigns in 2006. Others — especially those who had been involved in making the decorated tray — seemed embarrassed, as they had been particularly attentive in making it, and it had already been displayed in the parade and at the official opening ceremony, where senior government officials had been present. "It should not have happened", one of them said in disappointment. Still, although some wondered if the incorrectly spelled phrase *nay luang* could be considered blasphemous to the highly revered Thai monarch, most of them did not take the issue seriously, considering it a small mistake they could joke about among themselves.

The misspelled *rao rak nay luang* would have simply passed as an illiteracy issue, a failure of formal education, or an unintended consequence of the state's propaganda had it not been written by a group of Malay Muslims from southern Thailand, in a period when Malay Muslims were attempting to negotiate their subjectivity in questions relating to the state, their ethnicity, and religion. Tadika Samphan, long held by the Tadikas

in Raman district in cooperation with the mosques of each subdistrict (*tambon*), had been organized in Raman since 2007 by the Raman district office at the district (*amphoe*) level. Despite the district office's claims that the move had been made to ease the Tadikas' financial burden, Tadika personnel believed that the office's real purpose in taking over Tadika Samphan was to monitor traditional Islamic schools in the same way it did with *pondok* schools, which security agencies deemed to be a breeding ground for militant Islam or Islamic radicalism (Yegar 2002, p. 133), in part blamed for the recent unrest in the region (Liow 2006, pp. 90, 92, 107; Wattana 2006, pp. 125, 141).[4] Their discontent and unwillingness notwithstanding, Tadika personnel had no choice but to participate in the now district-controlled Tadika Samphan as "invited guests", unless they wanted to be suspected or accused of resisting the state or, worse, of being involved in the unrest.

While the state demanded allegiance, Tadika personnel remain committed to being Malay and Muslim. While cooperating with the administration of their district as Thai citizens, Tadika personnel and students have articulated their Malay heritage via their dress and parade decorations such as artificial silver and gold flowers, and their Muslim faith via the chanting of Koranic verses in Arabic. Importantly, despite increasing attempts on the part of Islamic reform movements to purify Islam at the expense of Malay culture (Anusorn 2016, pp. 22–44), the two spheres were jointly articulated on the decorated, footed tray. According to the person who designed the tray, the three colours of sticky rice symbolize the three pillars of life: red, the country; white, the religion; and yellow, the ethnicity, led by the raja or king. As the religion and the race refer to Islam and Malay, respectively, the message of the tray's symbolism is that one's life is jointly supported by Islam and Malay culture. Only the traditional meaning of the tray's conical shape, signifying Mount Meru, was discarded, given its association with Hinduism.

However, to articulate Islamic and Malay identities via a decorated, footed tray in the state-controlled Tadika Samphan competition raises a serious question that needs to be answered. The three colours of the sticky rice match the three colors of the Thai national flag, which signifies state ideology: the nation, the religion, and the monarch. But while the red stripes in the flag specifically refer to the Thai nation, the red sticky rice might refer to the Malay nation demanded by Malay separatist movements of previous decades. The yellow sticky rice, which symbolizes Malay ethnicity, is a difficult fit in the Thai nation, which is associated with ethnic Thais. And while the white stripes in the flag are closely associated with Buddhism, the

white sticky rice is definitely intended to represent Islam. One must ask, then, how the people who made the tray were in compliance with the state's demands, while simultaneously retaining their ethno-religious subjectivity. In other words, how could they reconcile questions of subjectivity in relation to sovereignty that have plagued the region now making up Thailand's Deep South for centuries?

The region's sovereignty has come into question throughout the course of its history. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, sovereignty over the region was ambiguous. The region contained various Malay sultanates whose territorial reach was not clearly defined. At the same time, the Siamese kingdom regarded these sultanates as vassal states and demanded that its territorial sovereignty be imposed on the region as well. The Siamese attempted to impose a suzerain–vassal relationship,[5] but to no avail — Siam was forever dissatisfied with the Malay sultanates' contributions, whereas the sultanates felt that Siam's demands were onerous and sometimes intolerable, resulting in frequent warfare over the centuries (Nik Mahmud 1994, p. 3; Che Man 1990, p. 34; Nantawan 1976, pp. 198–99; Uhlig 1995, p. 214; Teeuw and Wyatt 1970, pp. 8–9, 16–17; Yegar 2002, p. 74). It was not until the early nineteenth century that the question of ambiguous sovereignty was put to rest, when Siam changed the status of the Malay sultanates from tributary states to integral principalities. Because they had been offered a certain degree of autonomy — the ability to enact laws, control over taxation, and supervision over local government bureaucracy — the principalities staged no uprisings for a period of time (Nik Mahmud 1994, p. 4; Che Man 1990, p. 35; Idris 1995, p. 198; Nantawan 1976, pp. 20, 198; Scupin 1980, p. 60, 1986, p. 119; Teeuw and Wyatt 1970, p. 22; Uthai 1988, p. 213; Yegar 2002, p. 76).

The peaceful period in the region did not last long. Faced with a threat to its territorial sovereignty by Western colonial powers, Siam in early twentieth century launched a new policy with respect to the Malay principalities — central administration and the establishment of a provincial system — to ensure that its sovereignty was fully imposed across the territory, and as a result the principalities' semi-independence was put to an end (Nik Mahmud 1994, pp. 28–29; Che Man 1990, pp. 35, 62; Farouk 1984, p. 236; Idris 1995, p. 199; Nantawan 1976, pp. 201–3; Uthai 1988, pp. 213–17). This policy was modelled on the colonial *Beamtenstaaten* of the Dutch East Indies (Anderson 1996, pp. 99–100) and resembled the methods used by the British in the western Malay states (Uthai 1988, p. 213). This pernicious form of internal colonialism

represented "a permanent gain to the colonizers; no other calculations and assessments are necessary" (Che Man 1990, p. 241). Consequently, the Malay ruling elites occasionally revolted against Siam (Che Man 1990, p. 35; Idris 1995, p. 199; Nantawan 1976, pp. 202–203; Uthai 1988, pp. 214–16; Yegar 2002, p. 77).

Following the centralization policy, Siam launched a nation-building project that addressed sovereignty at the ideological level as well as the territorial one. Although King Chulalongkorn's (r. 1868–1910) *chat Thai* or "Thai nation" was inclusive of different nationalities (Keyes 1971, pp. 551–68, 1995, pp. 136–60), his successor King Vajiravudh's (r. 1910–1925) version of nationalism was limited exclusively to ethnic Thais (Anderson 1996, pp. 100–101), a policy that was followed by subsequent leaders. The People Party's government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram in 1939 promoted a pan-Thai movement or Maha Anachak Thai (Great Thai Empire) (Keyes 1995, pp. 136–60), whose ideology was to assimilate ethnic minorities into Thai culture (Scupin 1986, p. 126). The ethno-nationalistic ideology and assimilation policy were forcefully carried out under Phibun's government. In 1939, Phibun promulgated a royal decree, Thai Ratthaniyom (Thai Customs Decree), which attempted to create a unitary nation based on one ethnic identity and one religion. Any ethnic or religious attributes that were not in line with Thai ethnicity and Buddhism were susceptible to persecution. Malay Muslims of southern Thailand suffered more than other minorities as they were forced to pay homage to Buddhism as the state religion and were forbidden to wear Malay dress, to learn or speak the Malay language, or to have a Malay name (Nik Mahmud 1994, pp. 24, 30–31, 290; Che Man 1990, p. 65; Farouk 1984, p. 236; Nantawan 1977, p. 92; Scupin 1986, p. 126; Uthai 1988, pp. 252–53, 259–60; Yegar 2002, pp. 90–91).

Alienated from the Thai state, Malay Muslims of southern Thailand were attracted to the pan-Malay nationalism that was proliferating in Southeast Asia during and after World War II, leading to the foundation of many separatist movements in southern Thailand. Initially, these movements aimed to unify with their Malay brethren on the peninsula under the British-controlled Federation of Malaya. But after the possibility of such unification passed, forming their own independent Malay nation became their new goal. In the wake of Islamic resurgence in many parts of the world, the Malay separatists in Thailand integrated Islam more deeply into their ethnic-based nation (Che Man 1990, pp. 68–70, 1995, pp. 242–46; Farouk 1984, p. 239; Uthai 1984, p. 231; Yegar 2002, pp. 145–46). The separatist movements reached their peak in the 1960s

and 1970s (Forbes 1982, p. 1061) before waning in the 1990s due partly to changes in Thai government policies and internal rifts in the movements (Croissant 2005, p. 23).

The unrest, however, has resurrected since 2004, after separatists robbed a cache of weapons from Krom Luang Narathiwat Ratchanakarin Military Camp in Narathiwat Province. In addition to the anonymity of the perpetrators and the lack of concrete demands (Croissant 2005, pp. 21–22), what distinguishes the recent unrest from earlier insurgent activity are the increasing appropriation of Islam (Liow 2006, pp. 90, 92, 107; Wattana 2006, pp. 125, 141) and the fact that most casualties are now Malay Muslim civilians (Deep South Incident Database 2017). The unrest has claimed more than 6,500 lives and injured thousands more, and the violence continues unabated (Srisompob and Supaporn 2016). Although several factors — ranging from the political conflict (McCargo 2006, pp. 39–71), radical Islam (Liow 2006, pp. 90, 92, 107; Wattana 2006, pp. 125, 141), and shifting government policies (Croissant 2005, p. 30) to the influence of vested interest groups and crime rings (Askew 2007, pp. 5–37) — have contributed to the recent unrest, prompting questions about what it is and who is behind it, the unrest is still largely a political conflict rooted in ethnic and religious differences. In other words, it remains a question of the sovereignty of the Thai state over an Islamic Malay population that has never been resolved.

Political science and other academic fields have long focused on issues of sovereignty. However, since around the 1990s sovereignty has come under reconsideration and is now a cross-disciplinary topic in the social sciences and humanities. The work of Giorgio Agamben has largely been responsible for this change. Agamben argues that the problem of sovereignty is often reduced to the question of who within the political order is invested with what power, whereas the threshold of the political order, which he calls the "state of exception", is never called into question (Agamben 1998, p. 12). Agamben credits Carl Schmitt with highlighting the link between sovereignty and the state of exception by defining the sovereign as "he who decides on the state of exception" (Agamben 1998, p. 11; see also Agamben 2000, p. 40, 2005, p. 1). In addition, he maintains that sovereign power is manifest as the person who has exclusive power to decide who can be killed with impunity without himself committing homicide (Agamben 1998, p. 142). As such, rather than examining the political order, to understand sovereignty one should look at the threshold of the political order or at the state of exception, as it is a hidden point

where sovereignty is founded on the production of bare life (Agamben 1998, p. 83) — life that "may be killed and yet not sacrificed" (Agamben 1998, p. 8).

While the impact of Agamben's notion of sovereignty is wide ranging, it has a specific location in anthropology. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (2006, pp. 296–300, 304; see also Hansen and Stepputat 2005, p. 36) maintain that the emergence of sovereignty as a central concern in anthropology has been informed by the work of Agamben, which they think is capable of tackling the two long-standing impasses in their field of study. On the one hand, the traditional emphasis on kingship, sacrifice, and ritual in primitive societies has proven incapable of addressing the complex relationship between royal sovereignty and modern forms of governance. On the other hand, Michel Foucault's notion of "cutting off the king's head in the social sciences" is unable to determine, for instance, how to account for the proliferation of legal discourse premised on the idea of the state as a centre of society, if power is really dispersed. Agamben's notion of sovereignty, Hansen and Stepputat argue, is promising in overcoming such impasses, in that it shifts the focus from sovereignty as an ontological basis of power and order to sovereignty as a tentative and emergent form of authority grounded in violence and designed to generate loyalty, fear, and legitimacy. They then proposed multiple forms of "de facto sovereignty" — "the ability to kill, punish, and discipline with impunity" — that are in constant competition with one another in such places as colonial territories, postcolonial societies, and war zones. The state is not the natural and self-evident centre and origin of sovereignty but one among several sovereign bodies including criminal gangs, political organizations, vigilante groups, insurgents, quasi-autonomous police, and self-appointed strongmen and leaders.

Taking cues from such an anthropologically grounded, reconsidered notion of sovereignty, I maintain that the unrest in Thailand's Deep South is a result of the convergence of different forms of "de facto sovereignty" all attempting to impose their will over the Malay Muslim residents of the region. While the Thai state and the monarchy demand allegiance and loyalty from the region's residents as its citizens and its subjects, respectively, the residents at the same time are committed to Islam and their Malay identity, whose demands are often not in accordance with those of the Thai state and monarchy. Additionally, local insurgents demand the support of the residents using religion and ethnicity as their justification, and strongmen and criminal gangs for their part reinforce their rules via violence. All these factors only serve to compound the unrest.

This book is an ethnography of the Malay Muslims of Guba in the wake of the unrest that newly emerged in the 2000s. It examines how the unrest plays out on the ground, focusing on how it is experienced and explained by the residents. It also examines how different forms of de facto sovereignty — the Thai state, the monarchy, Islamic religious movements, the insurgents, influential figures like local strongmen and *kratom* cocktail producers/sellers[6] — impose their rules and subjectivities on and demand allegiance from the residents, and how the residents deal with and appropriate these impositions. The phrase *rao rak nay luang* inscribed on the decorated, footed tray is one example of such impositions, specifically regarding the Thai state's sovereignty articulated through the sovereign monarch.

The material in this book is drawn primarily from my three ethnographic research projects conducted in Guba in 2008–15. One project, involving research for a PhD dissertation conducted in 2008–09, examines how residents negotiate different forms of sovereignty (Anusorn 2011). The ensuing projects elaborate on specific themes — Malay rituals against the backdrop of Islamic reform, which I researched in 2012 (Anusorn 2013), and different forms of de facto sovereignty, especially as imposed by local strongmen, which I researched in 2013–14 (Anusorn 2015). As a native Thai speaker also capable in Malay, I used both languages in conducting my fieldwork, depending on the informants' fluency in Thai and their language preference. Given the sensitivity of the issues covered, the names of my informants and of some places mentioned in the book have been changed to ensure confidentiality. Part of section 6.2 — "We Love Mr King": Crafting Subjectivity and Enacting Agency through the Exceptional Sovereign. — has been published in *Thammasat Review* 19, no. 2 (2016), under the title "'Rao Rak Nay Luang': Crafting Malay Muslims' Subjectivity through the Sovereign Thai Monarch". The book's chapters are arranged as follows.

Chapter 1 examines the history of Guba village with reference to the Raman Sultanate. According to local lore, the village was founded as a place to raise elephants and horses that the Raman Sultanate deployed in its wars with the Patani Sultanate. Although the Patani Sultanate is predominant in the historiography of the Deep South, Guba's residents identify themselves with the Raman Sultanate and understand Patani to have been their enemy. The recent past has also dissociated the village from the broader history of the region. An influential figure in the village was involved in anti-government activities in the 1970s, but these had nothing to do with separatism, as separatist movements did not operate in the village during their peak in the 1980s. Guba's unique history and its recent past

have significantly shaped how the recent unrest played out in the village and how the residents responded to and made sense of it.

Chapter 2 examines how Guba's residents have experienced the recent unrest. The chapter explores the unrest through the everyday lives of the residents, focusing on how they have perceived and explained it. The chapter also examines how security forces operate in the area, how the residents respond to and make sense of these forces, and how the insurgents operate in the area. These phenomena have combined to create fear and distrust among the residents, forcing them to reconsider their subjectivity in relation to ethnicity, religion, and the state.

Chapter 3 specifically addresses questions of subjectivity in relation to sovereignty that the residents find themselves pressured to answer. On the one hand, the dissemination of certain strands of Islamic thinking encourages residents to live the life of "good Muslims", following new discourses of morality. This process was intensified by the insurgents using certain Islamic teachings to justify or facilitate their operations. On the other hand, the Thai state has launched various "help and care" programmes to ensure the loyalty of residents in the wake of the recent unrest. This effort has been reinforced by royal initiatives intended to attract the allegiance of the residents, seen as royal subjects, to the monarchy. The residents simultaneously have been forced to observe the rules set by local strongmen and other influential figures such as *kratom* cocktail producers and sellers, whose power over life and death became more pressing as the unrest spread. The chapter ends with an exploration of how multiple subjectivities, tied to different forms of sovereignty, were imposed on the body of a schoolgirl in a state ceremony that for many residents was itself a cause of tension and conflict.

Chapter 4 examines tensions and conflicts among different sources of subjectivity, in other words different forms of sovereignty. It examines how tensions between Guba's mosque group and a religious movement locally called Dakwah occasionally surface and how certain Islamic teachings invoked by the insurgents often generate confusion and debate among the village residents. The chapter also examines how certain Malay beliefs and rituals deemed incompatible with strict versions of Islam have been abandoned or adjusted. The chapter explores how Malay ethnicity and Islam have at times been in conflict with state ideology, which is implicitly associated with Thai ethnicity and Buddhism. The residents are therefore forced to address these tensions and conflicts directly.

Chapter 5 explores how Guba's residents manage the different forms of sovereignty they are confronted with. In the case of Islam, it explores

how those engaged with illegal businesses and activities deemed sinful selectively draw on and interpret Islamic teachings to justify their actions and arguments. It also examines how ordinary village residents — especially women — interpret Islamic precepts to render their everyday practices religiously permissible. In terms of Malay beliefs and rituals, the chapter examines how they have been modified to be in line with strict versions of Islam. The chapter then explores how the residents encounter the state, focusing on how they outsmart it. In the case of the insurgents, the chapter explores how residents in charge of local security and ordinary villagers observe the insurgents' rules while leaving some room of negotiation. The chapter then explores how village residents obey local strongmen and other influential figures almost without exception. The chapter ends with an exploration of a wedding ceremony, focusing on how the rules of different forms of sovereignty are simultaneously imposed and negotiated.

Chapter 6 examines how residents craft subjectivity and enact agency through the sovereigns. It explores how, through strict observance of religious duties, one female resident became a pious Muslim ascribed with agency to act in religious and related matters. Then it examines how the inscription of the sentence *rao rak nay luang* on a ceremonial footed tray enabled a group of residents to engage state authorities as royal subjects with authority. It is the king's two states of exception — the embodiment of the Thai state in a state of exception and a human being stripped of the god-king features — that made such engagement possible. While highlighting the potential of such submissive subjectivity and mediated agency, however, the chapter also points to the conditions and limits involved, especially with respect to the sovereign monarch.

The conclusion recapitulates previous chapters with a focus on the question of sovereignty in crisis. Thailand's Deep South has had to juggle conflicting sovereignties for centuries. Emerging from the ambiguous sovereignty of the sultanates, the region is now plagued with the undifferentiated sovereignty of the unitary state. Although the Kingdom of Thailand was created to enable the Thai state to exercise its sovereignty in a state of exception and had the king as the embodiment, several problems remain unresolved. For Malay Muslims to flourish in Thailand, the Thai state's sovereignty needs to be exercised in a fragmented or flexible manner.

Notes

1. Such a tray, or *phanphum* (พานพุ่ม), is a cone-shape offering made of auspicious materials such as flowers, cooked sticky rice, candles, joss sticks, and other items.

It is usually used in ceremonies, especially official ones, as a symbol of respect, reverence, and loyalty to revered persons including the king, the queen, the Buddha, historical persons, teachers, and so on. For state ceremonies involving parades, these trays are carried out in the parades and then set down in front of pictures or symbols of the persons being honoured in the ceremony.

2. In the abbreviation "Tadika", *ta* stands for *taman*, which means a park; *di* stands for *didikan*, which means education or upbringing; and *ka* stands for *kanak-kanak*, which means children. Tadika therefore literally means "children's education park". However, in practice Tadika is a traditional Islamic educational institution that is located in the mosque compound and has undergone significant changes since the 1990s. Originally, Tadikas were run independently by the mosque under the supervision of the imam and supported by the community. Later, in 1997, according to the central Thai government's Department of Religion's Order on Mosque Centers for Islam and Ethics Instruction, Tadikas were required to register in exchange for government support, such as teachers' wages of 2,000 baht per instructor per year. However, seven years later, only around 40 per cent of Tadikas in Thailand's Deep South had registered, due to the negligible amount of the wage offered and the complicated registration process. (The Deep South comprises Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat Provinces, as well as certain districts in Songkhla Province.) In 2004, the central government increased the wage and also allocated budget for mosque administration to attract more Tadikas to register. It also created a curriculum of Islamic studies for Tadikas, which are now officially called the Mosque Center for Islamic Studies (Tadika) (ศูนย์การศึกษาอิสลามประจำมัสยิด [ตาดีกา]). The curriculum, which is in line with the National Education Act of 1979, covers eight areas — six areas are about Islam and the two others are the Malay and Arabic languages (Abdulaziz 2013, pp. 31–46). Tadikas therefore now fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, although they are still run and administered by the mosque. They are also designed to be equivalent to primary schools or "worldly education", and as such they operate on weekends so that children can attend.
3. Although King Bhumibol Adulyadej passed away on 13 October 2016, given his seventy years on the throne and King Vajiralongkorn's "quiet" succession, Thais still consider *nai luang* to refer to King Bhumibol. Unless stated otherwise, *nai luang* in this book will likewise be intended to refer to King Bhumibol.
4. *Pondok* schools have long been a target of suspicion and distrust on the part of the central Thai government. Being aware of the central role of *pondok* schools in Malay Muslim communities and how these schools had obstructed the 1921 Compulsory Education Law and the cultural assimilation policies pushed forth in 1939, the Sarit Thanarat government, in connection with its overall strategy of national integration, proclaimed a policy in 1961 aimed to change the *pondoks*' traditional method of instruction and to weaken their impact. Under the new law, all *pondoks* were required to convert into private Islamic schools and to teach a standard government-designed curriculum, with the Thai language as the

medium of instruction, in order to "create and improve Thai consciousness, [and] cultivate loyalty to the principal institutions such as the nation, the religion, and the monarchy" (Che Man 1990, pp. 97–98; see also Che Man 1995, pp. 237–38; Idris 1995, p. 203; Nantawan 1977, pp. 94–95; Uthai 1988, p. 226; Yegar 2002, p. 133). Although most *pondoks* followed the law, some did not and remain a target of suspicion and distrust on the part of security agencies, especially in the recent unrest in which "radical Islam" has played a significant role.

5. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah defined the relationship between Sukhothai and its successor, Ayutthaya, and their vassal states as "galactic polity". In this polity model, Sukhothai was an "exemplary centre" where political symbolism was well demarcated but where an effective administrative structure was absent in outlying areas (Tambiah 1976, pp. 102–31). The Malay sultanates were not integral parts of Sukhothai but rather loosely circumscribed tributary polities. Sukhothai was able to enforce sovereignty over the Malay sultanates only spasmodically and with difficulty, depending on the current strength of the monarchy. In the Ayutthaya period, the sultanates likewise maintained a substantial degree of sovereignty, although during the latter part of the Ayutthaya dynasty, Siamese kings incorporated Nakhon Si Thammarat as a first-class province, which reflected a greater degree of Siamese sovereignty in the region (Nik Mahmud 1994, p. 3; Scupin 1980, pp. 58–59, 1986, p. 117).
6. *Kratom* (*Mitragyna speciosa*) is a species of tree whose fresh leaves are consumed to cure sickness, relieve pain, and, it is believed, boost one's energy. People in the Deep South have continued to consume these leaves even after the Kratom Act was passed in 1943 criminalizing such consumption. In the 1990s, the use of *kratom* leaves became more recreational than medicinal. Young males especially now consume *kratom* leaves in the form of cocktails — boiling the leaves in water and adding cough syrup, cola, and ice. *Kratom* cocktails are popular especially among young Muslim men because the effects are similar to those of alcohol, which is prohibited in Islam. The addictiveness of *kratom* leaves and the proliferation of their consumption have become matters of grave concern among residents of the Deep South. In a survey of Deep South residents conducted in July–August 2016, respondents identified the most urgent issue requiring action (81.3 per cent) to be drug addition (primarily *kratom* consumption), followed by the need for safety zones in communities (74.5 per cent) and the improvement of law enforcement and juridical procedures (68.5 per cent) (Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity 2016, p. 10). As shown later in this book, residents of Guba are frustrated by the *kratom* addiction problem because any solution necessarily involves state authorities and producers/sellers, all of whom are capable of using violence with impunity.