

# The King Never Smiles A Biography Of Thailand S Bhumibol Adulyadej

It is said that the famous ninth century Chinese Buddhist monk Linji Yixuan told his disciples, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." The deliberately confounding statement is meant to shock people out of complacent ways of thinking. But beyond the purposeful jolt from complacency there is another intention. For liberation, this axiom suggests that one should seek the Buddha nature that resides within, rather than a mere Buddha exterior. In this way, the metaphor of killing the Buddha dislodges a person from the illusionary perspective that enlightenment lies outside the body. The proclamation also highlights the power of violence, even on a symbolic level. Violence abounds in Buddhist thoughts, doctrine, and actions, however unacknowledged or misunderstood. If You Meet the Buddha on the Road addresses one important absence in the study of religion and violence: the religious treatment of violence. In order to pursue an understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and violence, it is important to first explore how Buddhist scriptures and followers understand violence. Drawing on Buddhist treatments of violence, Michael Jerryson explores the ways in which Buddhists invoke, support, or justify war, conflict, state violence, and gender discrimination. In addition, the book examines the ways in which Buddhists address violence as military chaplains, cope with violence in a conflict zone, and serve as witnesses of blasphemy to Buddhist doctrine and Buddha images.

Since 2005, Thailand has been in crisis, with unprecedented political instability and the worst political violence seen in the country in decades. In the aftermath of a military coup in 2006, Thailand's press freedom ranking plunged, while arrests for lèse-majesté have skyrocketed to levels unknown in the modern world. Truth on Trial in Thailand traces the 110-year trajectory of defamation-based laws in Thailand. The most prominent of these is lèse-majesté, but defamation aspects also appear in laws on sedition and treason, the press and cinema, anti-communism, contempt of court, insulting of religion, as well as libel. This book makes the case that despite the appearance of growing democratization, authoritarian structures and urges still drive politics in Thailand; the long-term effects of defamation law adjudication has skewed the way that Thai society approaches and perceives "truth." Employing the work of Habermas, Foucault, Agamben, and Schmitt to construct an alternative framework to understand Thai history, Streckfuss contends that Thai history has become "suspended" since 1958, and repeatedly declining to face the truth of history has set the stage for an endless state of crisis. This book will be of interest to students and scholars of South East Asian politics, Asian history, and media and communication. David Streckfuss is an independent scholar who has lived in Thailand for more than 20 years. His work primarily concerns human rights, and political and cultural history.

The daily robbing, bashing, drugging, extortion and murder of foreign tourists on Thai soil, along with numerous scandals involving unsafe facilities and well established scams, has led to frequent predictions that Thailand's multi-billion dollar tourist industry will self-destruct. Instead tourist numbers more than doubled in the decade to 2014. The world might not have come to the hometowns of the many visitors fascinated by Thailand, but it certainly came to the Land of Smiles. While the Thai media is heavily censored, and bad news stories about tourists suppressed, nonetheless there is more than enough evidence to demonstrate that something has gone seriously awry with the nation's tourist industry. In 2014, just as in the years preceding it, there were train, bus, ferry, speedboat, motorbike and car accidents, murders, knifings, unexplained deaths, numerous suicides, diving accidents, robberies gone wrong, anonymous bodies washing up on the shores and a string of alcohol and drug related incidents. Thailand had a dying king and serious succession problems, weak democratic institutions, an economy slipping into recession, faced issues of corruption across many of its key services and was host to international crime syndicates, awash with despised foreigners and drifting perilously towards civil war. Tourists choose one destination over another for a number of reasons, most of which Thailand scores highly on. But on the core issue of tourist safety, Thailand scores very badly indeed.

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