

## **Most Of Thailand is Not Truly Buddhist**

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February 4, 2012

### **True Buddhism or Not?**

If you have ever read anything about Thailand you may be led to believe that Thailand is a majority Theravada Buddhist nation. Some would say 95%. While it is true that the majority of Thai people would claim themselves to be Buddhist, the reality is that majority are not what the Thai would call “kreg sasanna” or fully devoted to their Buddhist faith.

In fact, most Thai would have a wide variety of things that they respect, worship, or venerate in a typical day or week that would not be considered Buddhist at all.

Most of these other things have to do with “spirits” or ghosts of people who are believed to have lived before in a past time.

### **Daily Needs**

Each of these articles of daily worship and veneration mainly have to do with one of the felt needs of:

Good Luck  
Prosperity  
Protection

### **Here are a just a few of the main ones I see daily:**

**Nang Kwak or แม่นางกวัก** – She is the patron spirit deity of all sales people and businesses and can be seen in most every business in Thailand. You will see her sitting on a worship shelf with a glass of red liquid next to her beckoning passing potential customers to come in and make purchases. Her “cousin” Maneki Neko is a small white Japanese cat whose paw moves its paw back and forth to beckon customers.

**Pra Kruang or พระเครื่อง** – These amulets contain a wide variety of images including those of past “super” monks believed to have magical powers to protect, give luck and prosperity to the people who proudly wear them . They can costs lots of money and have been said by some to be the cause of much of the [denigration of the Buddhist religion in Thailand](#). Some owners show off their wealth by the number of them that are worn around their neck. Special “sacred” tattoos are said to bring the same king of protection.

**Guman Thong** or กุมารทอง - The main purpose of creating the “Golden Child” is for protecting the owner. It is said to be a young child ghost that will fight the owner’s enemies and protect the owner’s treasures. I see these baby doll looking idols being fed real food daily. They are usually surrounded by small toys and are said to be jealous of other children. Owners refer to themselves as its “mother” or “father.” Regarding their creation, they have been tied to many diabolical practices which are said to make them more potent.

### **An Issue of Dependence**

Ask any true Thai Theravada (Pure Land) Buddhist monk and he will tell you that the only one that we should depend on for help is ourselves. Anything else is a crutch designed for those who are weak and will keep them from attaining true enlightenment leading to Nirvana.

Thailand is a land that is full of the supernatural. It is place that is full of “ghosts”, “spirits”, and “deities.” Whether one who considers himself a “true Buddhist” likes it or not, these things a very real and intertwined part of daily Thai faith and practice.

So, like the rest of us, most Thai people do NOT depend only on themselves in the true practice of their faith. They are putting their dependence and hope in something other than themselves even if only for the simple purpose of getting along better in this world.

My question then is when will they come to understand that their dependence should not be in a “thing” but rather in a “person” and that being the One who gave them life, breath, and every good thing. When will they come to know, respect, worship, and love their Creator? ([1 Tim 6:17](#), [Matthew 5:45](#), [John 15:5](#) etc)