

The Style of Hasdiling Funeral Castles and the Funeral Ceremony of Monks in Northern Thailand

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Received: 22 May 2025, Revised: 20 October 2025, Accepted: 25 October 2025, Published: 28 October 2025

Abstract

This qualitative research examines the cultural and religious significance of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle (*Prasad NoK Hasdiling*) and related monastic funeral rituals in Northern Thailand. Utilizing documentary review and field data, the study situates the Hasdiling funeral tradition within the framework of intangible cultural heritage, emphasizing its role in preserving Lanna Buddhist cosmology and ritual performance. Findings reveal that, while originally reserved for royal and senior monastic figures, the construction of Funeral Castles has evolved due to modernization and globalization, resulting in hybrid artistic forms influenced by central Thai aesthetics. Additionally, these rituals have become prominent in Buddhist cultural tourism, attracting both local communities and international visitors. This study argues that the Hasdiling Funeral Castle exemplifies the integration of faith, artistry, and socio-religious identity, while serving as a heritage-based tourism resource that reflects the adaptive resilience of Lanna Buddhism in the contemporary world. Furthermore, the study examines the styles and ceremonial practices associated with monks' funerals in Northern Thailand, documenting the "Ngan-Poi-Lor" tradition and the construction of funeral castles, with a primary focus on the Hasdiling bird design. Two primary styles of Hasdiling Funeral Castle have been identified: 1) the traditional Lanna pulpit style and 2) the tetrahedron pavilion style. It was noted that the funeral castles and accessories for monks are often more elaborate than those for laypeople, representing a significant effort in merit-making. The funeral procession includes moving the castle to a temporary crematorium (*Lak-Prasad ceremony*) and conducting the cremation (*Song-Sakan ceremony*). Ceremonial accessories are categorized as follows: 1) those associated with the funeral castle, including four bamboos for binding the robe (ceiling), a white or yellow cloth (board), a tri-tails flag, tiered umbrella, traditional fans, state umbrellas, and royal flags; and 2) those related to the monastery and ecclesiastical rank, such as three robes, alms bowl, ecclesiastical rank fan, appointment certificate, photograph, scented firewood, merit-making unit, yellow robes dedicated to the deceased monk, and the firework unit.

Keywords: Funeral castle, Funeral ceremony, Monks, Lanna culture, Hasdiling bird, Lanna Buddhism, Northern Thailand

Introduction

Lanna refers to a region in northern Thailand, including the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Phayao, and Mae Hong Son. Distinct cultural groups within the region include the Lanna culture group (Chiang Mai and Lamphun), the Eastern Lanna culture group (Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, and Lampang), and the Tai culture group (Mae Hong Son). The region possesses

unique linguistic and cultural identities. Founded by Phaya Mang Rai, who established Nop Buri Srinakhon Phing Chiang Mai as the capital in 1839, Lanna is characterized by its diversity in groups, religions, and beliefs, resulting in a unique cultural fusion. In the upper north of Thailand, it is customary to construct funeral castles modeled after various Himmaman animals, such as birds, Garuda, Naga, swans, and Erawan elephants.

The most popular is the “Hasdiling Funeral Castle” used for the cremation of Buddha Maha Thera, recorded around 2007. More recently, this type of funeral castle has been adopted in other regions, including central Bangkok, attracting attention from diverse cultural backgrounds (Saensa, 2011). Beliefs surrounding funeral rituals vary by locality, encompassing methods such as burial, cremation, and the practice of floating the deceased. Regardless of variation, these practices aim to send the souls of the deceased to heaven.

Preliminary data from academic papers and interviews suggest that funeral ceremonies in Lanna are categorized into three main groups based on social status, reflecting a belief system originating from India that involves the castle motif: ceremonies for kings or princes, monks, and townspeople. The details differ among these groups, including the design of the castle, which is believed to facilitate the deceased's transition to a better existence. For rulers or high-ranking monks (Krubu), the “Hasdiling Funeral Castle” is used (Suphannarat, 2010). The Hasdiling bird, believed to inhabit the Himmapan forest, is described as possessing the strength of five elephants and combines features of an elephant's head, swan's tail, and bird's body, symbolizing the majesty of kings and Krubu. For townspeople, smaller castles, such as those shaped like cats, were constructed in accordance with the deceased's status (Sunthorn, 2009).

The Hasdiling Funeral Castle represents an intangible cultural heritage in the Mekong River region, with traditions shared among Thai, Lao, and Cambodian communities. Recognized as a traditional form of craftsmanship in Lanna, the construction of Hasdiling Funeral Castle serves as a funeral for northern lords and Senior Maha Theras, conferring prestige and wisdom for passage to the heavenly Brahma world. Currently, Prasad Nok-Hasdiling is primarily reserved for the funerals of the Senior Maha Thera. Typically made of wood, the structure features paper trimmings for scales, movable components for the elephant's head, neck, trunk, and ears, as well as intricately designed bamboo mats for the swan's tail. The mechanism includes strings to animate these features. A bowl containing popped rice, placed in front of the structure, symbolizes good fortune during the cremation process. Culturally, the Hasdiling Funeral Castle is more than a crafted artifact; it embodies social and cultural codes, as evidenced in

the funerary rites for important figures, where the coffin is placed on top of the structure.

Globalization has influenced Lanna society, introducing elements of Western capitalism and central Thai culture. This influence is evident in the designs and patterns of funeral castles, which have increasingly favored elegance and decorative complexity over traditional Lanna delicacy. This paper presents beliefs and cultural contexts surrounding the Hasdiling Funeral Castle, focusing on castle styles and monastic funeral practices in Lanna culture. The aim is to explore ways to sustain and integrate traditional craftsmanship in the construction of Lanna-style Hasdiling Funeral Castle as an element of national cultural heritage.

Literature review

1. Motto and beliefs about Hasdiling bird

Belief in the Hasdiling bird originates from the Cham Devi Wong Scripture, which was rewritten in Pali by a Chiang Mai monk named Phra Bodhirangsi. The story recounts the founding of the Haripunchai kingdom, its kings, and significant events, translated into Thai by Phraya Pariyatthamthada (Pae Taralak) and Phra Yaan Wichit (Sitti Lojananon), and first published in 1920. This text refers to it as “Hasdiling bird” and states that it is a powerful bird born from an egg, capable of splitting the water with the wind from its wings, thanks to the power of the hermit Sajchanalai. The bird picked up the body of the dead sangkapat with its beak and flew off to deliver it to the hermit (Swearer & Premchit, 1998). Somjai (1998) agrees, stating that the Hasdiling bird story originated from a Lao legend within the Tai Yai tradition. (Tai-kun-Lue) to Chaingrung and Saan Hwee.

From the Buddhist Jataka literature, the story of a large bird holding a big animal in its mouth and beliefs about Himmapan animals and elephant-shaped birds of various peoples is the source of the belief to set a castle of paradise on the backs of Hasdiling bird or other birds to travel or fly to Heaven's paradise. Waenthong (2008) has proposed the concept that the Hasdiling bird originated in India and spread to Suvarnabhumi, including Thailand. Thailand's rich religious heritage was reflected in the country's art, including painting, sculpture, and literature. Tribhumi Phraruang, classified as literature, religion, is about birds, Hasdiling bird in the Himmapan forest. Evidence of Hasdiling bird in

various places of worship. Since Thai society in the past believed that certain animals, including Hasdiling bird, were the vehicles to transport the spirits of nobility to heaven, it was customary to use animal-shaped vehicles in higher- class funeral processions. The Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Ubon Ratchathani Province first took place in 1773, organized by the masters or people who

descended from Anyasi, who came from Chiang Rung. They had led the funeral service of such releases. Despite many processions, only the ceremony for the lord and Thera is used. The Hasdiling floating figure is a procession that emphasizes the distinctive Hasdiling bird, characterized by its head as a layer, the body of a bird, and a swan tail.



Figure 1 Hasdiling bird in Wat Den Sali Si Mueang Kaen or Wat Ban Den, Chiang mai
Source: Researcher (2018)

2. The concept of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Thailand

The Belief of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in northeast Thailand (Nanthachak, 1992) is that the traditional Lord of Ubon Ratchathani city dies upon death. There will be a building in the form of a Sakdiling bird or Hasdiling bird, according to the ancient royal traditions of Chiang Rung Saen Wee Fa, dating back to the era of Ubon Ratchathani. The position or status of the person who can enter the Hasdiling Crematorium is held by Anyasi (Artyasi), and later, another group that can use the Hasdiling Crematorium comprises the only senior Thera monks in this regard. Sarang (2019) and Ginthavorn (1995) studied the use of the Meru Hasdiling bird that appeared in Roi Et Province. Explained the motto in Nok Hasdi ling that it comes from a conceptual framework based on the Buddhist dharma lecture thesis 4 legends: 1) The Dharma story of Queen Samawadee 2) Panya Sanibat Jataka scripture; the story of Suthana Jataka 3) The legend of religion in Lanna; the creation

of Lamphun and 4) a legend in the cosmic scriptures about the role of Hasdiling bird in a ceremony on the human funeral. Kanchana Chinnak (2007) has analyzed the relevant link between Hasdiling birds and funerals. Why did Hasdiling bird have to be involved? It was found that during the early Rattanakosin period, a significant change occurred in the Hasdiling bird cremation practice. In the past, the Hasdiling Funeral Castle was limited to the masters of Champasak descent and was performed at Thung Si Mueang. Later, after fearing that it would be a royal- style ride in Bangkok with a cremation at Thung Phra Men, Sanam Luang, this tradition was abandoned, except that it was only allowed for Thera. In addition, Sikha (2013) has found that the traditional ruler of Ubon Ratchathani City, upon death, would create a crematorium in the shape of a Husadiling bird, according to the ancient royal tradition of Chiang Rung Saen Wee Fa. Dating back to the era of Ubon Ratchathani, the position that has the right to bring the body to Hasdiling bird must be

held by lords called Anyasi and their descendants, including the governor, the ruler of the royal family, and the prince. In addition to the mentioned above, there are no eligible persons except the senior Thera of the city.

The cremation ceremony at this crematorium is very rare due to the lack of native royalty; there may only be the senior Thera present. In the cultural dimension, we can see that “*Creating of Nok Hasdiling*” is not only a technical process, but there are social and cultural codes that are integrated into the Hasdiling building process, including the cremation of the dead body of the dignified body in a casket placed on a crematorium in the shape of a Hasdiling bird. Hasdiling bird, as a form of art, reflects the social processes of different groups of people within a social unit. A set of northeastern culture, tied to a character or actor, a set in the field, and a cremation ritual stage since his death. The beginning of the creation of the meaningful Hasdiling bird from society, culture, and others is not for everyman but persons with merit who are of a high class. In this case, it is aristocracy that possesses both a high level of power and national origin, in the case of ethnic origin, or the class arising from the cultivation of prestige, according to the approach of Isan culture society. Even the birthplace may come from ordinary people. For the latter case, most, if not all, are the senior Thera, who are most revered by the Isan people. For this reason, the physical body of the corpse that disappeared from the earth must be different from that of ordinary people to create a noble memory in the mind. Sarang (2019) described the Hasdiling bird in the cremation form of Ubon Ratchathani people as an art that reflects social processes. It is a cremation ritual of different groups of people in Isan society and culture, linked to the creation of stories, characters, or actors in one field, restoring memories, and creating another kind of social memory. It is not a body of ordinary people, but a person of merit who has both a high level of origin and a national origin that comes from common people, but accumulates goodness according to the guidelines of Isaan society and culture, and becomes a respected person. Hasdiling is a large bird with great power, and when it is used in the cremation ritual, it shows that the deceased has great merit and can be on the back of a bird. Hasdiling bird was able to bring the souls of the deceased to heaven.

In central Thailand, Phinsuda Dee Chuay (2012) explains beliefs about the pattern of Himmapan animals in the Phra Merumas Ceremony. Issues relating to Hasdiling bird said that the motto of the belief in the Merumas. It should have originated from the myth of the fictional gods who were influenced by the ancient Khmer kingdom, which believed that the earth god, in his deathbed rite, must be sent or returned to heaven, or Phra Sumen Mountain, as for Himmapan animals in the royal funeral pyre was erected as a symbol that represents Mount Meru. The form of Himmapan posts in the royal funeral pyre since the Ayutthaya period onwards has not changed the format of the original so much. The overall layout currently remains similar to Ayutthaya. It's just different strokes in Western art influence art from Thailand. Since the reign of King Rama 4, the use of Himmapan animals in the Merumas. It is used only to decorate the meridian and as part of the royal funeral procession. Jenjai (2017) found that the beliefs of the Nok-Hasdiling lacked clear evidence when they first emerged. It's just a story that has been passed down from the elders, with the belief that the Hasdiling bird is a Himmapan animal, as large as five elephants. Noble is a vehicle to bring the spirits of the monks and masters. He is considered to be a noble person in society, so he built a castle on the back of the Hasdiling bird in order to bring that soul and the dwelling castle to heaven. Today, in Lanna folklore, Hasdiling Funeral Castle is only used for the funerals of monks.

Because he believes that after the integration of Lanna districts into Thailand, the tradition of cremation of the master's corpse using Hasdiling Funeral Castle was abolished and applied to monks instead. Krajachan (2017) explained that originally, procession at the remains of Phetracha that took the lead eagle Tain that would be the use of a rhino or water elk, as shown in the affidavit of Khun Luang Hawat describing the royal funeral process of King Boromakhod, or even in the Rattanakosin period, the rhino was used as well. Based on the age of the evidence, it is possible that in the days of Phra Petracha or before, the eagle was probably the most prominent animal. But in the photo book of the funeral procession of Somdej Phra Phutthayodfa Chulalok Maharaj, this eagle is identified as the Hasdiling bird. It is believed that the Hasdiling bird is a powerful bird. The bird can bring the souls of the deceased to heaven. In Ubon Ratchathani, there is a

legend that during the old royal funeral of King Nakhon Chiang Rung, wild birds had Hasdiling bird from Himmapan flying to remove the remains. This led to the need to find a hero to take the corpse, until Sita used the arrow to shoot the bird; the Hasdiling bird fell and died. The consort therefore provided the royal cremation ceremony with Hasdiling bird. With the mentioned myths and beliefs, the Lan Xang and Lanna Way still maintain a tradition of cremating the elder Thera with Hasdiling Funeral Castle. This seems to be popular with

the Thai people, while the Burmese use the castle of Break birds for Phra Thera as well (often understood as a swan). However, whether it is an eagle or a Hasdiling bird, each reflects the funeral tradition with birds that may be derived from Indian traditions or the traditional traditions of the people in this region, which already held the sacred bird as appearing in front of the mighty drums in Dongseon culture. Why do you respect birds? Because the bird is the symbol of the sky, that means heaven itself.



Figure 2 Hasdiling bird in Himmapan

Source: National Library (1999)

In northern Thailand, Scholars who have initiated the development of the construction of the Funeral Castle include Somjai (1998), who has studied funerals and artisans in the Lanna community. Explain the creed, funeral, ritual, and craftsmanship, as well as knowledge. And the beliefs hidden behind those phenomena, especially the funeral ceremony of Kruba Sangha and the castle on the back of Hasdiling bird, such as the story of Phiman, the address of the gods, the origin of the funeral castle, the meaning of Phiman, Bussabok, the castle, and the castle building Piman on Hasdiling bird. The problem with Hasdiling bird includes the tufting

ceremony, tufting wheels, dragging castles, and funerals for local monks, among other issues. The above writings raise evidence from the pulpit. Lanna literature as for the new scholars who have studied the development of building a funeral castle Himmapan animals in Lanna through the book called *The World in Lanna*, Saensa (2011) has studied and explained the development, conducted a study and explained the development of castle building burial of Himmapan animals based on the evidence from Lan Leaf, explained that in the northern region of Thailand today or in the past used to be the main metropolitan area of the Lanna Kingdom.

The tradition is to build a castle on the bodies of Himmapan animals's style various birds such as Break bird, Naga, swans, Erawan elephant and the most popular creation is "Hasdiling bird" for "Worshipping" or cremation of Kruba Mahathera and during the period 2007 - 2010 began to bring this form of funeral castle to be held in other regions as well. Such as the central region of Bangkok, etc., which is an exciting thing for foreigners and cultures who have come to experience the funeral of a castle on Himmapan's animal is not focused on "seniority" but focus on the "National, Education" and "qualifications" as Chao Fa Yod Ngam Muang, Prince of Chiang Saen who was only 25 years old, but put a different corpse castle on the Hasdiling. It's able to build a funeral castle both the male boss and the female boss and it appears that this kind of cremation ceremony continues until 1803, before the Burmese city of Chiang Saen in Lanna is broken just a year after the masters, monks, nobles, philosophers, royal masters, craftsmen, and large groups of Chiang Saen people spread and settled in the districts of the Northern. The key factors that influence a castle built on the bodies of Himmapan's animals for the lord and Kruba Maha Thera's Lanna in the era of "*King Luang*" which is the royal country of Siam especially the Seven Royal Lords although at that time, the Burmese influence of the government has disappeared from Lanna with Siam taking over it in the line with Hemanta Sunthorn's study that was written through an article on Hasdiling birdCastle of Lanna Land (Sunthorn, 2009) and articles on Hasdiling Funeral Castle, "Song-Sakan" the royal submission ceremony. (Boss of the North) and Phra Maha Thera in the land of Lanna Songsakarn (2018) stated that high culture, or court culture, was influenced by Buddhist cosmology. In particular, the concept and beliefs of merit-making, which had an effect on reincarnation, birth in samsara, and in various worlds for the King and the royal family who held the status of "fictitious "upon death, returned to the state "U Patti Devi in the heavens, both the Dao and the Dusit. This ascension can maintain the status of both deity and bodhisattva. The wait time is reminiscent of the Enlightenment ideal of the Buddha, presented in the future tense. Corresponds to the death of King Lanna, called "Surakot," which means returning to be an angel. Therefore, the residence of the King and the royal family, as a fictional deity called "Prasat Palace," is a

plan to simulate the landscape of the universe, with Phra Sumen Mountain serving as the location of the heavenly Dawan star at its center. Thus, the replication of the royal funeral castle in Lanna is based on descriptions found in Buddhist scriptures. In the section, Chamadevi Wong Annals of Creeks, the key role is played by the Chiang Mai native and legend.

Did not mention the installation of the body of any Lanna King on the back of Hasdiling or other vehicles in the ceremony in any way. There is only the creation of Phra Viman Prasad to enshrine the body. It appears again in the Chronicles of Yonok, mentioning the funeral ceremony of the last King Wisut Devi, who was the last King of Mangrai. The elephant drags Preah's body to send it to the Thung Wat Lok Moli, in accordance with Jenjai (2017), who studied Hasdiling Funeral Castle's style, listed in Chiang Rai, and found that the overall castle layout would have the same characteristics. The part of the Hasdiling body made of wood, decorative paper, and beautiful openwork patterns. With an elephant's head, a bird with wings and a tail overlapped by the castle to represent the morgue. The castle itself consists of a base that is a glass plinth, columns, a canopy, and a five-tiered roof. In that holistic sense, every artisan has the same characteristics. But they differ in the shape of the castle and the patterns that decorate it. The subtlety and imagination of each genus are in the craftsmen who create their own works. Castle form can be divided into 3 shapes: (1) Viharn-style or traditional tetrahedron castle-style; (2) Viharn-style castle-shaped or Tetrahedron-top-Mondop castle, but have been modified to be beautiful in terms of patterns, higher form adding more and more castle peaks, and the decorations are detailed and beautified; (3) The shape of the Lanna-style castle back.

Research methodology

This research is a qualitative study aimed at describing the style of Hasdiling Funeral Castles and the funeral ceremony of monks in Northern Thailand.

Research scope

1) Scope of area: the area resides and creates the Hasdiling Funeral Castle, the creator of Hasdiling Funeral Castle. Sala (Craftsmen), who built the corpse and is an expert in constructing the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna, which is still undergoing restoration. In

the upper northern regions, seven provinces have preserved and carried on: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan, and Phayao.

2) Scope of information provider; The main contributors in this research were divided into 3 groups: (1) 20 craftsmen who built Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna (2) 10 Lanna philosophers who had knowledge and experience about patterns and the ritual of making the funeral on Hasdiling Funeral Castle (3) 10 persons Academic experts of history on Lanna forms and rituals with academic achievements researches that appear continuously.

3) Content of scope; The main content and key issues that this research team looking for answers and new knowledge consists of (1) the status of previous knowledge and research related to Hasdiling bird and the funeral castle in Lanna (2) cultural motto and concept of Hasdiling bird (3) Traditions and practices related to funeral rites in Lanna (4) the design of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna and (5) the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna.

4) Scope of Time: The research team used the total research duration from 1 May 2016 until May 2020, a total of 36 months of research, due to the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle during the post-Buddhist lent (November-March) only.

Research process

1) Review of the existing knowledge status; The Researcher has done a review of knowledge-oriented culture about Hasdiling birds published in the form of documents, by the monk, Sala, scholars, and academic institutions, by reading from the university library. To understand the contents of the knowledge presented to the general public, considering the stories, legends, art, forms, and development of the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna that are told or presented in Local randomization during observations and participation in each step of the activity. He was able to provide insights on certain issues; therefore, he was asked to interview on those specific issues.

2) Field data collection; The research team was exposed to the field storage space area where resides and creates the Hasdiling Funeral Castle the creator of Hasdiling Funeral Castle (sala), who built the corpse expert in building the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna that is still undergoing restoration, conservation and

heritage in the 7 northern province of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan and Phayao. Interview and observe 3 main informants: (1) 20 craftsmen that built the Hasdiling Funeral Castles in Lanna; (2) 10 Lanna philosophers who had knowledge and experience on the patterns and rituals of making the funeral on the castle; (3) 10 Lanna scholars who has knowledge and experience on the patterns and rituals of making Hasdiling Funeral Castle to analyze and synthesize the main content and key issues that the research team looking for answers and new knowledge consists of: 1) the status of previous knowledge and research related to Hasdiling bird and the funeral castle in Lanna; 2) cultural motto and concept of Hasdiling bird 3) Traditions and practices related to funeral rites in Lanna, 4) the design of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna, and 5) the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna.

Data collection and analysis

The research data were collected, analyzed, and synthesized to answer the research questions and objectives. In both parts of beliefs and cultural contexts on the Hasdiling Funeral Castle and the patterns and developments of the handicrafts, the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle of each area in Lanna by dividing the data into 2 types as follows:

1) Secondary sources: Sources from the document include basic information about the beliefs about Hasdiling bird and the patterns and developments of the craftsmanship of the construction of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna. For once, the LAN leaves behind books, research reports, articles, research papers, documentaries, videos, websites, and press releases.

2) Field data: providing insights to fill gaps in sampled knowledge that's not from the documentary evidence or current information and insight from the sala, Lanna Folk, philosopher, monks, and those who are knowledgeable about the funeral castles and funeral ceremonies of the Lanna monks by conducting interviews and observations in constructing Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Lanna as well as sala Lanna.

Research results

1. Cremation ceremony for monks who are Maha Thera in Northern Thailand

The cremation ceremony of the Maha Thera monks is called Poi Lor, a popular tradition on the funeral castle on the back of Hasdiling bird. There are 2 types: 1) the urban style or the Lanna Dhamma and 2) the Jaturamuk Phiman castle located on the back of Hasdiling bird by the corpse castle and the device in the ceremony is more elaborate than the corpses of the villagers. Considered as a big merit-making event with great merit. The movement of the corpses is a ceremony to drag the castle to a temporary cremation site that is specifically built, called "*Phithi Laugh Prasad*", and then perform a cremation ceremony, called "*Phithi Song-sakan*" with the belief that the dead should be in a beautiful house as beautiful Prang Prasat or canopy to honor the dead and as a sign of the gratitude of the grandchildren who have made an elaborate funeral home. There are many funerary houses that are used in Lanna. All kinds of corpses and houses are commonly used to be dragged with a small wheel under the base of Mae Sadue or Mae Raue to move the body to cremation anywhere or in the area of the village cemetery.

In northern Thailand, the funeral of the monk referred to as "*Poi Lor*" refers to the funeral of the monk as a senior Thera is sacrosanct. After the death, the group of faith will organize a large funeral and make a castle to put the corpse on the top of Chaturamuk. The corpse of the monks who put in the castle was considered a great honor. The villagers are considered to have to attend the ceremony in order to have the opportunity to drag the monks' funerary castle. This is because it has wheels for the convenience of dragging the corpse castle to the cemetery. It is believed that if you go to the Poi Lor tradition, you will get great benefits. For that tradition is a merit-making event held in the fire of the Buddhist dead monks and disciples wished to jointly organize the event to commemorate the merit and virtue and show of gratitude before the cremation of the body of the monk. "*Poi Lor*" will be held only for the funeral of the abbot or monk who has grown having served the community as it should, the faculty of faith and temple students will prepare all the work in the event. There is an invitation to join together to make merit, offering the monks, feasting on food, monks who come to the ceremony. Food for guests from

different homes gives the opportunity for charitable people to donate and eat thoroughly according to their faith. Organizing the ceremony can be considered as a large event at the district or sub-district level. Depending on whether Phra Thera is important or has an administrative position or is the Maha Thera that the people respect a lot such as the great "*Poi Lor*" ceremony of the Kruba Srivijaya Thera in 1938 at Chama Devi Temple Lamphun Province.

For funeral procedures and rituals for monks in Lanna culture, the funeral of monks of the Lanna villagers that is a monk who is ordained in Buddhism feel willing to dedicate his life to the religion, which is called death to the temple, even if he dies when he is old as Kruba Sangha, the funeral will be held in large scale. If dying before Lent or in the rainy season, the body will be kept in the dry season. That is, around February to April, the funeral arrangement, when the monks die, villagers will perform a "*Pitri Hang Loy*" ceremony. Similar to the villagers' rituals, but the rituals are humble and more detailed. (KetPorm, 2018)

1) When the elderly monks die, the house will often pour honey into their mouths to keep the corpse from decaying by pouring the honey down the neck until the honey has not gone down. Some places don't fill honey because of the belief that the monks who have a very old age often learn the five angelic spell recipes when they die, they will not stink. After filling the honey, it will tear the monk's robe into a long piece. Wrapped over the body, separated into legs and arms, and then placed into the coffin, make a sermon, pray, make merit for 7 days and then cover the body.

2) When the coffin closed, the villagers' faith committee will open the lid of the coffin to examine periodically throughout, perhaps for 1 month or 2 months if the body has a lot of lymph. The caretaker will remove the burial cloth and replace it with a new one and sometimes change the ashes to the straw that supports the bottom of the coffin.

3) When the date of the arson meeting is close for 2-3 months, the temple committee will contact the hiring of the castle to put on the body. In which there will be a selection of skilled technicians because it is a detailed work skilled funerary craftsman located in the temple. The creating of the older monk's funeral castle must take at least 1 month to be completed. The castle will be large and tall, located on the back of the Hasdiling whose head

is an elephant, has a trunk, has tusks. The lower part will use 2 coconut trees or sugar palm to place all the components of the castle.

4) Then set the body for charity day and night, there will be a pray. Villagers come to listen to sermons and prayers every night. Some people will be hosting a Requiem. Some of them accept to host firewood. For the firewood to be cremated, the monks would choose strong wood cut it into pieces of about 50 cm in size, and hooves of a good size, peel off the bark, dry in the sun. Then use turmeric to make it yellow.

5) Place and time of the most monk's crematorium burn in the fields or in the temple area that is very spacious at the burning point. It will rise off the ground and can support Prasad Nok, there will be 4 beautiful and longest bamboo beams, buried in 4 corners where it will be burned.

6) When it's time to organize a towing process two large and long ropes are tied to the mother's wood, i.e., one coconut tree on each side. Under the wings of Hasdiling bird, there is an opening hole for the man get into the bird to pull the string so that the bird's head is turned left and right, wings move up, move down, the trunk is rolled up and scooped out. The rice paddy sprinkled forward looks like a living bird, in front of the procession is a three-tailed tung and then a novice monk, a procession of three cloth holders, a requiem holding rice paddy flowers. Then there was a procession of people carrying ropes to drag corpses. The procession that follows the funeral castle is a group of musical instruments. In front of the procession for monks and novices, there will be people hitting the Phan. The sound will be loud. This pan is similar to a gong but is thinner with a button in the center. And there will be someone carrying a signal flag at the far end keeps signaling to those who drag him know that it have to stop or to move while dragging 2 coconut trees, it will slide forward. It is a flow with a lot of human pulling force. When dragging the funeral castle to its destination, it invited the monks to draw the requiem cloth. The cremation of a monk does not lift the coffin down to bathe or dissect it like a layman.

7) When it's time to burn, there will be a fire indicating the cast using a small fire bong about 30 cm long the lower part has 2 wheels, the top is often made in animal form, such as the birth of a dead monk's animal, etc., and when the fire is placed on the ground

to ignite, it tells the fire to move from the base point about 50 meters away from the castle, rushing up to crash into the castle. One of the corpses is used to tell dozens of cast fire lights that hit the castle. Dashed past the side of the castle. The cylinder that crashed into the castle then a fire will rise to cremate the body. When the castle is already on fire, the people who come to the drag will gradually return home. Some people wait to see if the fabric on the ceiling will burn or not. It is believed that if the ceiling cloth does not burn out that mean the dead monks have great merit. The villagers would ask to share the cloth a little bit each person to keep for worship.

8) After the day of burning, the monks will perform a bone-collecting ceremony to make merit again and then give it to the disciples. The rest is kept in stupas or pagodas for people worship. The funeral of the monk is a big event. The funeral castle was built together, pomp, waste and spend quite a bit because they are neatly arranged and always as tall as electric pole. It is said that in the past, the construction of the funeral castle built together taller than today. Many traditions of making a funeral castle set on top of the buds for royalty and royal family included monk was not recently formed. If it has been around for almost 4 centuries.

It can be concluded that the monks' rituals in northern Thailand are rituals vary widely and are practiced according to different cultures, local traditions, or class. In some places there are practices that are deviating from the original purpose of their ancestors. And contributes to being wasted by reason because the exact format is not known, belief in funeral rites the monks are local characteristics, have their own customs and procedures. Elaborate both in matters of preparing the body funeral ceremony and funeral removal including the cremation ceremony but at the same time, there is still a lack of knowledge in performing rituals so that the monk's corpses can be properly handled according to tradition by those who has knowledge and expertise in the rituals. Otherwise, it is believed to adversely affect the living family and the souls of the dead.

2. The style of Hasdiling Funeral Castles in Northern Thailand

1) Construction of a funeral castle

At the funeral of Phra Thera, a belief deeply rooted in the way of life for hundreds of years is observed. Especially when building a castle to put the corpse, it is essential to establish a foundation. Because the Lanna people revered monks as a higher class than nobles, when they die and are reborn in the higher worlds or in Thepsathit ablutions in heaven and on Mount Meru, the belief is a combination of Buddhism and Brahmanism. The construction of the funeral castle for Phra Thera in Lanna depends on the faith, power, property, beliefs, and preferences of the deceased, the disciples, as well as the board, and can also divide the form of a castle as follow; (1) a castle with a spire; a castle with a spire may have one or more peaks. It depends on the level of decomposition of the corpse. The royal master and the young Thera use 1 Castle Peak. (2) The Hasdiling bird-shaped castle; a popular type of crematorium in the shape of a Hasdiling bird or a bird with a trunk with tusks like elephants carrying a castle in a coffin. Using Hasdiling bird as part important in decorating this crematorium may be used according to beliefs in the story of Tri Phum Phra Ruang (3) Lang Gai castle; the roof is curved down like a cape with the peak in the middle from the top to the four pillars of the castle is a ridge along the sloping corners, mostly used on the corpse of the lord. However, some believe that rulers and wealthy individuals use this type of castle. (4) Asana Castle is a crematorium with a flat roof as a ceiling and is decorated with colorful lotus-like decorations on top. This castle is often used for the corpses of laymen and the fairly wealthy.

2) Style of building crematoriums

The cremation of Phra Thera in Lanna can be divided into two forms: (1) the conventional cremation. The cremation ceremony was held in a traditional style, with no cremation request. (2) Cremation request for the cremation from His Majesty the King. Once the ceremony has been decided upon in a clear format, it will be carried out in most cases by hiring different castle builders, such as Hasdiling bird, or other skilled artisans to honor the dead. As for the cremation area, it depends on local beliefs and popularity. Some places are popular for burning in the temple area. Some of it has to

tow the burning castle to the place or places as spacious center field, for the fire that burned in the temple area, if not in body haulage Castle. A crematorium will be built on the site of a castle, or a castle-like structure, constructed from the remains of birds or Himmapan's animals. And decorate the area beautifully. The funeral was then held in the castle. And what is indispensable is that there are 4 pillars of sangs. (Suphannarat, 2019) What can be seen as a symbol of the work is the castle, which the Lanna people will read aloud as Phasad, or a large crematorium. Exquisitely crafted, it is a place where the dead monks are housed. The castle is popularly shaped as a Hasdiling bird, an animal living in the Himmapan with the head of an elephant. Lanna villagers call it the Hasdiling, which was placed on the salats made of logs again, in which part of the work would have merit. There are religious and ritual theaters in 3-4 days, and then they will transport the castle to a temporary crematorium established in an open field, somewhere they deem suitable, not far from the temple. The corpses were dragged from the castle to the cremation sites far from the temple area. The castle will be drawn to the burnt place. The steps are as follows: the faith, the disciples, will drag the castle containing the corpse to a temporary crematorium. When moving the castle to Jabon Sathan, a traditional requiem ceremony will be held prior to the cremation. (Chainam, 1969) Another special burial for a monk is a blowgun. The longest tree trunk. The Lanna people call Yaosud Gaousud Pai a structure made of the full length of a tree, consisting of four logs held in the four corners of the area. The cloak and the top of the robe will be stretched with the robe as well, and the lower part of the place where the castle will be placed is laid on the robe. When the castle is burned down, the four beams will be knocked down, bringing down the robes that are stretched across them, and the villagers will divide the robes into their own rags or sacred objects. It can be considered a great act of alms to another tradition in which Buddhists believe in showing gratitude to monks, as well as worshiping them in the same manner as the general public. (Attapanyo, 2004)

In the area where the funeral castle is set up for the cremation of dead monks, there will be a ceremonial plantation or Pha Kamping for staying away from the sun. For the burned place, the fence will block the rajawat area, set the perimeter into a 4-sided square, the

area clearly is a chart of an ancient tradition, (1) a form of fencing Ratchawat all 4 corners with Hitkatan. Become the president in the middle and block the umbrella or tiered basis in each corner (2), forming a barrier fence. Ratchawat all 4 corners and then block or tiered indoor decoration with arches or stairs. Or the entrance to the Chittakanathan on each side of the Chittakanathan. (3) Pattern of the Ratchawat fence barrier sets up the directional castle in each corner of the Ratchawat fence. In the castle that is located at each corner, Popular insignia medals as fan of rank high air chamber as the groom on the tiered dessert table mats, pillows, etc., were all sitting on the batting chart with all of the universe. Or in some cases, there are still invitations of the 4 deities of the direction or the 4 dames stationed on the castle in this direction. In the case of the corpse of Phra Thera within the fence of Ratchawat, 4 large trees are placed higher than Prasat Hasdiling bird, stretching the cloth of the monk's robes or the robes of the deceased monks. All work requires the cooperation of all parties because the higher the rank, the higher the

rank of the monk. Ceremonies, as well as the number of guests expected to attend, are anticipated to be substantial, and the work is commendable. Everyone has to give up their wealth and energy to complete the task. Without glitches, some may co-host a crematorium, others will host print invitations, or some will host a requiem service, including the purchase of firewood or sandalwood used at the ceremony, or even provide drinking water to those who come to make merit, thus demonstrating a virtue. Another great event (Wongthet, 2008), and the decoration of the monk's cremation castle will look bigger than that of the common people. The monks who lent a more or Thera at the Pontifical each rank high. Respected by the faith, people will organize even more great events. And would prefer to keep the body until the dry season or during the period of no rain, from November to April. Therefore, the event will be held at a time when the country's state of affairs is more prosperous. The roads had wires hanging around, making it difficult to drag the castle. Because the castle itself is huge.



Figure 3 Hasdiling Funeral Castle in Northern Thailand
Source: Researcher (2018)

3. Ceremonies in the funeral ceremony for monks in Northern Thailand

For the ceremony of Poi Lor and its symbolic meaning, the funeral rites of monks or the Poi Lor

ceremony involve many detailed steps. It is a ritual that combines elements of Buddhist rituals, Brahminism, and occult practices. Because the Lanna people consider the death of monks a significant matter, villagers help

one another in all aspects. When a monk dies, disciples and villagers will prepare the body before putting it in the coffin. Funeral preparation rituals are similar to those of the general villagers. Except for the ceremonies or offerings of the monks, there will be additional:

1) Appliances that are required for monks or as a residence to preserve the clergy. There are 8 items, including a monk's bowl, yellow robes, sobong, Sangkhati, waist cloth, water filter, needle box with thread, scraper, and sharpening stone. All set up in front of the coffin or in front of the funeral crematorium of Phra Thera.

2) Components of the clergy. Items that have been bestowed upon by His Majesty. Items that are accessories or clergy are not equal and not the same. In this regard, according to the level of the monks that were bestowed upon, which may be identified as levels such as Fan of rank, Samanasak, Institution, Tri, etc.

3) Three-tailed Tung is made according to the belief that after death, the soul must be born in any one of the worlds according to the merit that has been created. Hoping for the three tails to bring the spirits to the great worlds, the three tails described by the sages are (1) as a symbol; (2) to be used as a ceremonial; (3) to honor the gods; (4) In honor of the dead; (5) to convey the meaning of the three watas: karma, passion, retribution. Lanna's motto is that all human beings will suffer a defeat to the death, holding three tongs in front of the body. It is like surrendering to the King of Death by being present in front of the funeral procession to the cemetery. There are 2 types of monks who prefer to use yellow cloth or bring a new piece of cloth to cut into a tung pattern decorated with silver paper. General villagers often use mulberry paper or white cloth to cut it into a Tung shape. Decorated with indigenous patterns.

4) The blowgun-pillar has 4 large bamboo poles and 4 corners of the castle above. The robe or cloth of the dead stretched to the ceiling. Under the belief that the body is composed of four elements (earth, water, wind, and fire), which must eventually be broken down for participants to think and meditate, the monks represent these elements. There are four precepts for purification. There will be four large bamboo pillars at the four corners of the castle.

5) Ceiling cloth. When Sangha Thera Lanna passed away, the cremation event was arranged in the

form of a castle set above the back of Hasdiling Bird. The corpse was beautifully decorated in the form of a castle located above the back of Hasdiling bird, believed to bring the soul to a distant paradise by setting up a ceremonial county designated as the accession. For sending the message above the castle where the body is located, there will be a sangha or sangha cloth of Phra Thera who died to stretch in the air. This refers to another type of ceiling cloth, as mentioned in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, where the use of ceiling fabric is discussed. According to the story, Malla, the ruler of Kusinara, laid a cloth ceiling decorated in the Mala Atthon province to worship the body of the monk. By implication, the use of the ceiling cloth was believed to have been a means of dying under the clergy, but on the other hand, it was also believed to be a barrier against fire while performing an outdoor cremation, which caused it to burn up to the Brahma Heaven. This would be inappropriate. Therefore, the Sangha cloth is spread over the funeral castle, which is one of the important characteristics of the afterlife in Lanna culture that remains a tradition to this day.

6) Plank cloth. It is a cloth that covers the ground under the crematorium, using a yellow cloth on the ground called a plank cloth. In order to prevent the heat from cremation from reaching Garuda Muang Naga.

7) Fragrant firewood. It is a specially organized firewood that regards the monks as the elite in society, as it is firewood that common villagers cannot collect for the cremation of monks. It must be the wood of the flower trees only, such as Sandal wood, Golden Shower Tree, White Champaka, etc. When arranging firewood, it will be cut to a length of approximately 1 meter and will be decorated with turmeric or wrapped in silver and gold paper. Then, they were always tied together with incense and candles.

8) Bangsag Bangsoon. It is a tall machine that looks like a fan. It features a long handle made of gold-embroidered cloth, characterized by a round trapezoidal pattern created through gold embroidery. There is a pointed top, the edge is jagged, like a lotus petal, with a long wooden handle covered in Metal, extending from the top to the tip, measuring 78 centimeters. The shroud, when invited to the parade, is inserted between the five layers. It is shaped like a flower bush; the part is larger than the shield. It has the shape of a bush, resembling a

lotus flower made of cloth with gold thread embroidery. It has a steel frame and a wooden handle covered.

9) A hot pot. It is one of the essential tools in the funeral ceremony. This hot pot is made from coconut shells, which are softened and pressed into a gourd pot or a small clay pot with an isthmus. Place this pot in the alabaster and hang it on a 2-meter-long bamboo pole. And use the fire from this cauldron to light the cremation fire in the procession of transporting the body into the cemetery. Popular Lanna people read that Forest Huo. Where the smoke from this hot pot is always a long way ahead of the procession.

10) Sandalwood. Since ancient times, people in Lanna have used white and red sandalwood from the rich forest. Later, other types of wood, which the villagers called Toom or Tum, were used. It is a softwood with a very beautiful yellow color, and it will be used as a thin sheet planer. Then, it was arranged next to the bamboo, which formed a short flower about 12 inches high, secured with a small nail to prevent it from moving or being blown away.

11) Tri-Requiem fabric. They are prepared for the monks to consider starting from the least senior or less noble monks, proceeding in sequence until the highest elders are reached at the ceremony.

12) Blog fire (Bong fire). It is used in the Song Sakan ceremony. There are many kinds of it, but the popular blogs include Blog Fire Laor, Blog Fire team, Blog Fire Jakajan, Blog Fire Sampalok, and Blog Fire Chang, which feature special, strange sounds, such as the melancholy sound of relatives in the background. This type of fire is commonly used only in the ceremony. The motto to ignite the cremation is assumed to be used to suppress sadness before the cremation, allowing the focus to shift to the sound of the fire.

Discussion

Cremation ceremony for monks who are Maha Thera in Northern Thailand is known as the Poi Lor Ceremony. It's popular to build a funeral castle on the back of Hasdiling Bird. Until the birth of a local artistic heritage known as "Hasdiling Funeral Castle". This reflects the tradition of cremation with birds, which may be derived from Indian traditions. Religious belief was inserted in the worlds of painting, sculpture, and literature. "Tri Bhumi Phra Ruang" is a literary work that revolves around birds, specifically the "Hasdiling"

in the Himmapan forest. Evidence of Hasdiling birdin various places of worship was discovered, and hence, Thai society in the past believed that some animals, including the Hasdiling bird, a popular animal vehicle in funeral processions, brought the souls of the elites to the heavens. The traditional customs of the people in this region have long carried the sacred bird, which appears in front of the mighty drums in Dongseon culture.

Why do you respect birds?

Because the bird is the symbol of the sky, which means heaven itself. When examining the Hasdiling Funeral Castle in the cultural dimension, it becomes clear that "Hasdiling Funeral Castle" is not just a skilled craftsman's process, but also involves social and cultural codes that are integrated into the Hasdiling building process, including ceremonies for the dead bodies of important persons. Therefore, it is essential to find a way to continue, create, and integrate the handicraft work and the construction of Hasdiling Funeral Castle in the Lanna style as a cultural heritage of the nation.

The findings of this research on the Hasdiling Funeral Castle reveal not only the ritualistic dimensions of Lanna Buddhist cremation practices but also their broader significance as intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003). The Hasdiling birdfuneral castles embody religious cosmology, drawing on ancient Buddhist texts and Himmapan mythology, which Tambiah (1970) and Swearer (2010) have argued are central to the performative nature of Southeast Asian Buddhism. Such practices demonstrate how ritual acts function as socio-religious expressions that both preserve and transmit cultural identity across generations. Furthermore, in the contemporary era, these funerary rituals have acquired new significance within the context of cultural tourism. As Cohen (2012) observed, Buddhist rituals are increasingly reframed as cultural heritage attractions, a perspective reinforced by the UNWTO (2019) in its emphasis on Buddhist tourism and pilgrimage as drivers of cross-cultural exchange and economic development. In Northern Thailand, the Hasdiling Funeral Castle has emerged as an important site of Buddhist cultural tourism, attracting both domestic and international visitors who seek to witness and learn from this unique socio-religious tradition.

New knowledge contribution

This research contributes new knowledge to the interdisciplinary fields of religious sociology, Buddhist studies, and cultural tourism. It highlights the Hasdiling Funeral Castle not only as a ritual object but as a living manifestation of Lanna Buddhist cosmology and socio-religious identity. The study advances understanding of how intangible cultural heritage is transmitted and adapted in response to globalization, providing an analytical bridge between traditional ritual practice and contemporary cultural tourism studies. The findings also expand on prior works (Tambiah, 1970; Swearer, 2010) by situating the Hasdiling ritual within broader debates on religious performance, identity formation, and heritage conservation.

Practical implications and applications

The results of this study have several practical implications. First, for cultural heritage management, the documentation of Hasdiling funeral castles can support policy-making aligned with UNESCO (2003) guidelines on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Second, in the field of Buddhist cultural tourism, the study provides a framework for developing sustainable tourism initiatives that respect local religious sensitivities while promoting cross-cultural learning (Cohen, 2012; UNWTO, 2019). Third, for academic and educational purposes, the research serves as a resource for curricula in anthropology, religious studies, and tourism management. Ultimately, at the community level, this knowledge can empower artisans, monks, and local stakeholders to preserve and adapt their traditions, while also gaining economic and cultural benefits through responsible heritage tourism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Hasdiling Funeral Castle ritual serves as more than a local custom; it represents a synthesis of art, faith, and community identity that is deeply embedded in Lanna Buddhism. Its role as intangible cultural heritage underscores the need for continued preservation and scholarly attention. At the same time, its adaptation into the sphere of Buddhist cultural tourism illustrates the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in an era of globalization. By situating the Hasdiling ritual within the frameworks of religious sociology, intangible

heritage studies, and tourism research, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how ritual practices evolve and gain renewed significance in contemporary society.

Suggestions for future research

Future studies could further explore comparative perspectives by examining similar funerary traditions in other Buddhist cultures, such as Cambodia, Laos, or Myanmar, to understand cross-cultural continuities and differences. Ethnographic research focusing on community perceptions of the Hasdiling Funeral Castle could also enrich insights into its evolving socio-religious role. Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches that combine digital humanities, visual anthropology, and heritage management may provide innovative methods for documenting and preserving this ritual. Finally, longitudinal studies could investigate how globalization and changing tourism patterns will continue to influence the transformation of Lanna Buddhist ritual practices.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

No generative AI tools were used or if only basic tools (e.g., grammar or reference checkers) were employed.

CRediT author statement

Prateep Peuchthonglang: Essentially an intellectual contributor, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization, Research design, Methodology, Data analysis, Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Software, **Yathaweemintr Peuchthonglang:** Data curation, Writing- Original draft, preparation, Visualization, Investigation. **Boonrat Na Wichai:** Supervision, Resources

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