

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix
Note on Transcription xiii

Introduction 1

1. Monks and Kings 23

Ambiguity as Biography 26

The Why of Somdet To 53

Conclusion 69

2. Texts and Magic 72

The *Jinapañjara gāthā*: The Most Powerful Text in Thailand 77

History of the *Jinapañjara gāthā* in and Outside of Thailand 81

Recentring Theravada Buddhism 85

Hidden Pools and Holy Water Machines 88

Chanting Clubs and Horror Films	92
The Theravada Tantra or the Esoteric Mainstream	100
Speaking Magically	109
Conclusion	119
3. <i>Rituals and Liturgies</i> 121	
Rituals, Temple Festivals, Decomposing Corpses, and the Nationalizing of Diversity	125
Liturgies and Cacophonies	139
Expanding the Thai Buddhist Repertoire	153
Conclusion	158
4. <i>Art and Objects</i> 161	
Misplaced Piety: Images at Wat Mahabut, Wat Srapathum, and Beyond	167
Beyond Commercialism: Thinking About Amulets Historically and Materially	189
Ultraman and the Siam Commercial Bank: Murals and Agency in Modern Thailand	213
Conclusion	219
<i>Conclusion</i> 222	
On Repertoires and Syncretism	225
Notes 231	
Bibliography 283	
Index 315	