

The Center for Southeast Asian Studies presents:

The Monks and the Hmong: The Special Relationship between the Chao Fa and the Tham Krabok Buddhist Temple in Saraburi Province, Thailand

The Tham Krabok temple in Saraburi Province, central Thailand is the home of an unusual Buddhist order, one that was founded by a female, Mian Parnchand, a self-professed Bhikkhuni commonly known as ‘Luang Por Yai’, and was led by her nephew, an undercover Thai policeman-turned-monk, Luang Por Chamroon Parnchand, and his younger brother, Charoen Parnchand. The temple is best known for treating large numbers of drug addicts for over more than half a century, and for being a home for large numbers of Hmong people from Laos during the 1980s and 1990s until the majority were



accepted as political refugees in the USA and elsewhere in 2004. Although Wat Tham Krabok (WTK) is well-known for supporting the Hmong, most observers have little understanding about the special relationship between the Hmong—particularly those led by Chao Fa leader Pa Kao Her—and WTK. In this presentation, I explain the circumstances that led to the development of this relationship between two unorthodox religious movements, including the history of WTK and how Hmong political refugees from Laos came to become closely linked to the temple through anti-communist militant resistance and violence while the monks there maintained strict Buddhist practices, including not using any form of transportation other than walking.

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Ingraham Hall, room 206

Free and open to the public.