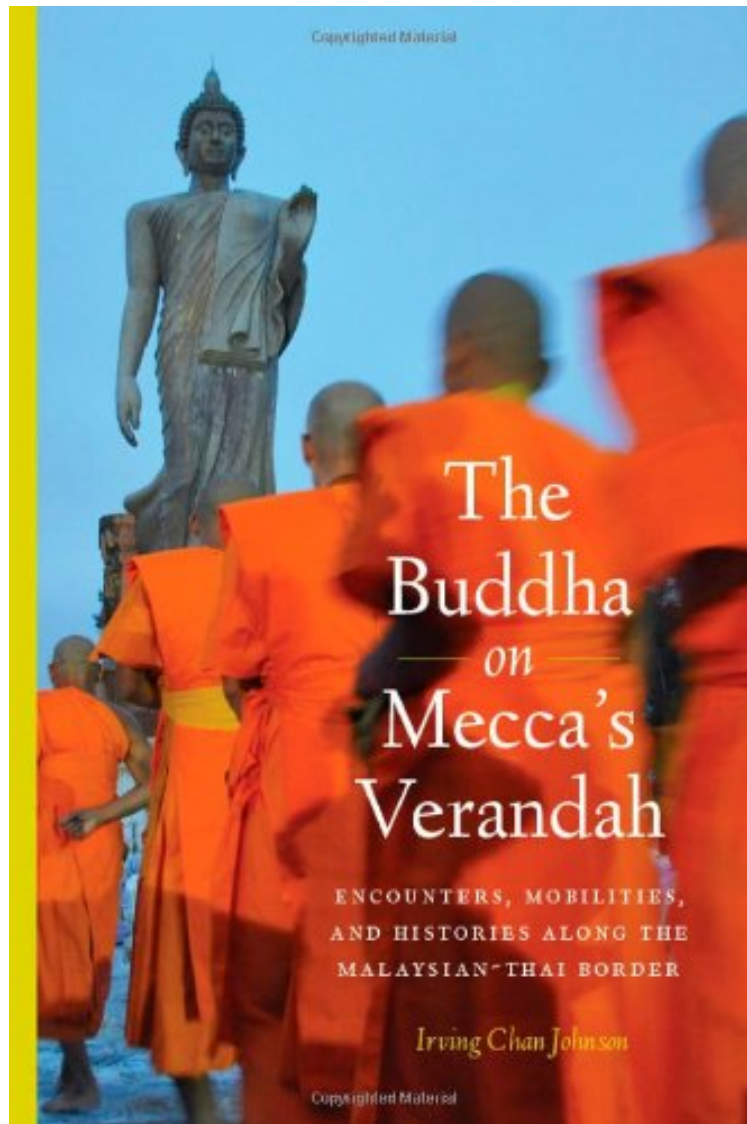


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The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah: Encounters, Mobilities, and Histories Along the Malaysian-Thai border (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies)

Irving Chan Johnson

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Irving Chan Johnson : The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah: Encounters, Mobilities, and Histories Along the Malaysian-Thai border (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah: Encounters, Mobilities,

and Histories Along the Malaysian-Thai border (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. He's lived in the community and is bi-cultural himself, ...By Don WoodsHe's lived in the community and is bi-cultural himself, so his insights on the Buddhist communities in Kelantan are well-presented and clear. But he repeats the same ideas in several different chapters, and I felt the book was too long and needed further editing.

The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah examines the many ways in which people living along an international border negotiate their ethnic, cultural, and political identities. This ethnography of a small community of Thai Buddhists in the Malaysian state of Kelantan draws on rich, original vignettes to show how issues such as territoriality, identity, and power frame the experiences of borderland residents. Although the Thai represent less than 10 percent of the Kelantan population, they are vocal about their identity as non-Muslim, non-Malay citizens. They have built some of the world's largest Buddhist statues in their tiny villages, in a state that has traditionally been a seat of Islamic governance. At the same time, the Thai grapple with feelings of social and political powerlessness, being neither Thai citizens nor Muslim Malaysians. This thoughtful study offers new perspectives and challenges the classical definition of boundaries and borders as spaces that enforce separation and distance. With insights applicable to comparative border and frontier studies around the world, The Buddha on Mecca's Verandah will appeal not only to anthropologists but also to specialists in Asian and Southeast Asian studies, cultural geography, religious and ethnic studies, globalization, and cosmopolitanism.

"Johnson's careful documentation of local histories is an important contribution and gives unusual time depth to his discussion of contemporary ethnic identification. Consequently, this book is a valuable addition to studies of Thai ethnicities, particularly the complex formations of Thai-ness that take shape on and around the borders of Thailand." Mary Beth Mills, *Pacific Affairs*: Volume 86, No. 4 December 2013 "This ethnographic consideration of an overlooked borderland is a welcome addition to Southeast Asian Studies. Recommended." *Choice*, April 2013 "This book offers a distinctive take on border peoples and places. The son of a Malaysian Thai mother and American father, Johnson is at once the observer and himself an example of a transborder person. It is the outsider/insider tension that makes the work particularly compelling." Charles Keyes, University of Washington "This book represents in-depth, qualitative research into the daily lives of the Thai peasants in Kelantan and the dilemma of identity that they face. One of its strengths is the author's privileged access to the social field; he makes no secret that he is part of this village universe and he consequently makes a very original contribution to the literature." Alexander Horstmann, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity About the Author Irving Chan Johnson is assistant professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore.