

## Joss House Ministerial Regulation: Specific Old Laws for Control of Religious Shrine in Thailand

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### Abstract

*Rooted culture and belief are common things in any setting where there is a long history. Joss house is a specific belief of the local people seen in Indochina. This place is a specific religious shrine controlled by public community aiming at performing religious activities. The specific Lawson Joss house is very interesting. Here, the authors present and discuss on the specific old laws for control of religious shrine in Thailand. The law has been in used for nearly one hundred year (since 1917). This is an example of old classical law that is still presented used.*

**Keywords:** Joss House, Laws, Thailand, Shrine, Religious

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### INTRODUCTION

Rooted culture and belief are common things in any setting where there is a long history. The rooted religious belief is an important belief that usually affected way of life of the local people [1]. For sure, it can affect the traditional legal system in each setting. Regarding religious belief, specific practice is usually seen and there might be specific place for such religious practice. This is totally a spiritual dimension of the local community. For example, in Islam Sufism, Charan et al. noted that “majority of the people and visitors have strong belief systems upon the blessings of Sufis, and they visit shrines to fulfill their social, economic, physical, mental and spiritual wishes [2].”

Joss house is a specific belief of the local people seen in Indochina. This place is a specific religious shrine controlled by public community aiming at performing religious activities. The specific Lawson Joss house is very interesting. Here, the authors present and discuss on the specific old laws for control of religious shrine in Thailand. The law has been in used for nearly one hundred year (since 1917). This is an example of old classical law that is still presented used.

### Joss house Ministerial regulation in Thailand

As already mentioned, the first and only on law on Joss house in Thailand has been used since its first declaration in 1917. At that time, absolute monarchy was the local political system in Thailand. At present, the local political system in Thailand is democracy but the specific law on Joss house issued in 1917 is still in used.

The specific law was firstly declared by the Minister of Ministry of Interior of Siam (Siam is the old name of Thailand). The law was written in Thai language (details can be seen at [www.reic.or.th/law/lawfile/law030826110628.pdf](http://www.reic.or.th/law/lawfile/law030826110628.pdf)). The details of the law include definition of Joss House, way for Joss house setting, operation and regulation and specific details for fining system for one who violates this law.

Until present, this law has never been revised but it is still in use. The interesting issue on the law is the out-of-date details of fining system for one who violates this law. At its first implementation, the fining rate is extremely high, but it becomes very low at present due to the currency rate change. It is no doubt that the violation of the law, especially for land invasion

by nearby household is common. Hence, the revision of the law is necessary. Indeed, the use of ancient rites versus new laws is an interesting topic for discussion. Ancient rites such as circumcision in Muslim practice might have some important rooted reason that the new laws might not effectively replace [3]. The revision of the ancient law requires not only direct consideration for updating of the out-of-date details but also the conservation of the good rooted traditional local wisdom hidden in the law. Nevertheless, the important way that still remains effective in regulation is the way of life of the local people. One who violate the Joss house usually get sanction and banning from the community.

### CONCLUSION

Joss house Ministerial regulation is a very old law in Thailand. This kind of law is rarely seen in other country. The law was implemented for nearly one century and considered a historical piece of legal document that is still presently effective.

### Conflict of interest

None

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