

## Political Discourses in Isan Stone Inscriptions

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### บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้วิเคราะห์ประสีก์เพื่อถอดรหัสว่าทกรรมการเมืองในศิลาจารึกอีสานสมัยไทย-ลาว จากมุมมองภาษาศาสตร์เชิงวิภาคย์ เพื่อถอดความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างศิลาจารึกกับบริบทสังคมผ่านภาษาผลการศึกษาพบว่าลักษณะภาษาในการสร้างว่าทกรรมการ เมืองในศิลาจารึกอีสานมีลักษณะที่เด่นชัดในเรื่องรูปแบบตัวอักษรและชนบในการสร้างศิลาจารึก และการเลือกใช้คำ การผูกประโยค ที่แสดงความสัมพันธ์เชิงโครงสร้างส่วนส่วนเนื้อหาของว่าทกรรมจะสะท้อนภาพการประกอบสร้างอำนาจและความชอบธรรมในสังคม ของกลุ่มบุคคล 3 กลุ่ม คือ กลุ่มของกษัตริย์และบุนนาคผู้มีอำนาจสูงสุด กลุ่มพระสงฆ์ และกลุ่มประชาชน ความสัมพันธ์ซึ่งอำนาจระหว่างบุคคลทั้งสามชนชั้นนั้นยังแสดงให้เห็นความสัมพันธ์ของอำนาจระหว่างมนุษย์กับมนุษย์ และมนุษย์กับความเชื่ออีกด้วย ความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจเหล่านี้ได้ถูกนำเสนอโดยตรงแต่ยังอุปผัตติสารที่ต้องผ่านการถอดรหัสและการตีความ และจะต้องอาศัยบริบททางสังคมในสมัยนั้นเป็นแนวทางในการพิจารณา

**คำสำคัญ :** ว่าทกรรม ศิลาจารึก อีสาน

### Abstract

This purpose of this article was to analyze political discourses in Isan Stone Inscriptions during Tai - Lao reign from the view of critical linguistics in order to explain relations between the stone inscriptions and the contexts of society through language. From the study, it was found that the outstanding characteristics of the language used to create political discourses in Isan Stone Inscriptions were character styles, tradition of stone inscription creations, word choices, and sentence constructions which showed structural relations. On the other hand, the contents of the discourses reflexed construction of power and producing of righteousness in society of people from 3 groups; kings and noblemen who were the most powerful people in society, monks, and citizen. Relations in the manner of power between these three groups of people also portrayed relations of power between human and human, and between human and beliefs. These power relations were not directly presented but were implied within contents which needed to be decoded and interpreted. Moreover, context of society in those periods had to be considered as guidelines for the analysis as well.

**Keywords :** Discourse, Stone Inscriptions, Isan

### Introduction

The word “ว่าทกรรม” was used to replace the word “Discourse” (Chaiyarat Charoensin-Olan, 2000: 19) in Thai language for the first time by Somkiat Wantana, the lecturer of Faculty of Social Sciences, Kasetsart University. The meaning of the word “Discourse” used as reference in the academic circles

in Thailand was influenced by Michel Foucault, the post structuralism philosopher. The word contains several meanings depending on the point of views and basic theories. The reason might be that Discourse Analysis was a field of study based on multiple overlapping field, for example, linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, seminary, psychology, sociology, cultural

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studies, literature, and communication.

Besides being used as a tool by human to understand each other, communication also has its own purposes. Namely, it is used to portray meaning which can be understood by sender and receiver as well as in political and governmental manner to connect ruling classes and citizen in the society together in both horizon manner (between individuals or groups) and vertical manner (between ruling classes and citizen).

It was unavoidable to look into power relations, answer to society problems, and political thinking while studying political thoughts, and studying the mentioned topics required tools to fulfill the answers to their questions. In Thailand, studies often looked into literature, which might or might not be political literature in itself, to find political thoughts, for example, the stone inscriptions "Ong Karn Chang Nam" (ओंการแข่งขัน) or "Flying of Rumor Verse" (การทิ้งปัจตรเพลงยา). Therefore, literature is not only the study of arts since it may contain political meanings once study and analyze its content and subjects carefully. The studies could bring true benefits to the action research study of language since language and discourses chosen to be used on the inscriptions also contained some ideals of the society reflected through the authors, social events, power relations, identities, and some social ideologies (Krisadawan Hongladarom and Jantima Eamanondh 2006: 10). Studying language in terms of discourse decoding in both language and society dimensions showed the power hidden within.

The term "discourse" contains several meanings. According to linguistic meanings, it was defined as the language beyond sentence. Language of this level contains autonomy meaning and is complete in itself. It is verbal and written language in actual situation with the purposes or goals upon communicating from sender and perception of receiver at the same time.

The meaning of discourse according to critical linguistics had connected the concept of linguistic with the concept of sociology and

anthropology in language analysis in the level of texts, purposes, and contexts with linguistic ideas which had influences on society and culture molding and controlling. On the other hand, society and culture also had influences on language. Therefore, language and society became part of each other. Language acted as reflector, producer, and reproducer of thoughts and beliefs while knowledge was the ideology in the society in which the language was being used. Namely, it defined and controlled society perceptions at the same time.

Discourse in the view of critical linguistics is all the processes and operations from which society, language, and media interact to each other in the manner of reflection. It creates meanings, defines and controls perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs through linguistic elements choosing and arranging as well as reproduction. In accordance with this statement, it implied that critical analysis of discourse consisted of three dimensions according to the conclusion of Fiarclough, 1995: 98:

Descriptive dimension, the analysis of the subject which is the study as linguistic tradition and the seminary study by considering basic unit and linguistic elements in both verbal language--vocabulary, phrase, sentence, grammar, conjunction, sentence construction --, and nonverbal language--light, color, line, and picture elements -- in order to understand its content and the independent meaning of the text.

Interpretation dimension, the processing analysis of discourse practices e.g. reading, implied meaning, and ideology hidden in the deeper level of the subject. The study is to find the meaning of the subject as the outcome of the encryption process (or the outcome of the meaning creation process through language), including studying various mechanisms to create specific meaning, especially the power related meaning, definition, and social beliefs.

Explanation dimension, the study of relations between language used in the subject, social context, and culture which appear to be an explanation of the relations between language, media, and

society which lead to ideology matters and power relations in society as well as power of language and its owner and also the power beyond society events. Sometime it may portray the contest for "Area of Ideology" or "Area of Meaning" in order to posses power through language as well.

In this article, researcher analyzed the decoding of political discourses in 70 Isan Stone Inscriptions in the period of Tai - Lao from the book 'Tai - Lao Isan Stone Inscriptions' gathered and complied by Thawat Punnothok, published in 1987 by Khun Pin Aksornkij Publishing. The author used critical linguistics point of views in descriptive dimension, interpretation dimension, and explanation dimension to find relations between stone inscriptions and social context through language by studying 2 main topics which were:

1. Characteristics of language used in political discourse creation in Isan Stone Inscriptions
2. Decoding of political discourses in Isan Stone Inscriptions

### **1. Characteristics of language used in political discourse creation in Isan Stone Inscriptions**

According to the study of Isan Stone Inscriptions from Tai - Lao period, it was found that Isan Stone Inscriptions were like social area for people to communicate with political discourse codes through language. The outstanding characteristics were letter styles and the tradition of stone inscription creation - sandword choices, sentence construction, and structural relations.

#### **1.1 Characters and tradition of Isan stone inscription creations**

According to the study of Isan Stone Inscriptions by Thawat Punnothok (1987), it was found that stone inscriptions found in Isan region in 12th Buddhist century were recorded using Pallava Alphabet the first generation Indian Script. The inscription was recorded in short Sanskrit and its content was mostly about Buddhism. Later in the 16th Buddhist century, there were some changes in tradition of Isan

Stone Inscription creations which were their characters, content, ideology, and the methodology used to record the inscriptions. Namely, the inscriptions in that era were recorded in Khom Thai Script which was derived from Pallava Alphabet, and the languages used were the combination of Khom and Sanskrit. Content of the inscriptions were about the kings, god worshiping, and slaves and land dedication to the temple. The methodology of inscription creation was made clearer by explaining who, what, and why in the content. These type of stone inscriptions ended in 18th Buddhist century.

During 19-20th Buddhist century, there was a gap between continuity of stone inscription creations and culture due to no evident was found. Accordingly, there was not enough reference to describe Isan society in this period. Despite that, in the late 20th Buddhist century, a trace of new culture, Tai - Lao culture, was found replacing Khmer culture in the Phra Nakhon era. Namely, the inscriptions in those era were recorded using Tham and Tai Noi alphabets with Isan dialect without a trace of Sanskrit and Khom alphabets. The content of the inscriptions was changed into the content about Theravada Buddhism and activities of ruling classes such as the king, Tao Pia, and monks who maintained Buddhism. Methodology of inscription recording was also altered and there were usage of Chulasakarat and Thai Lunar Calendar instead of Mahasakkarat and Khmer calendar.

#### **1.2 Word choices, sentence construction, and structural relations**

Sentence construction showed power relations through language via the subject of the sentence who perform action. It was generally found that subjects of the sentences or the persons who performed the actions were the powerful persons. On the other hand, persons who received the actions were generally the powerless persons, the person who behaved contrary to orders or conflicted with desirable attributes of people in the community, for example:

“สมเด็จพระมหาธรรมราชา หลวงศาริราชเจ้าได้  
โโคกาสให้แต่ก่อน.....มีพระราชครัวทราประสิทธิ์  
ให้ท่านไว้ (กับ) .....อันกิตมรรในเขต (แคนไน่นั่งนี้)  
ให้เป็นอุปการแก่แก้วทั้ง 3 ในอารมณ์ ตราบท่า  
5 พันวัsssa ”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดริมท่าวัด)

“ตัวปีเสียงเหม้า มหาราชครุศรีสัทธรรมวงศ์  
พากุศิษย์ลรรษพุทธรูปดินและอัญชชาทาย  
ไถ่ตัวล่วงเดือน 5 เพชรัตน 1 มือรวมได้ฤกษ์ 12  
ลูกชื่อว่าจิตตากุญญในราศีกันย์เบิกแล้วไยแอกลั่นค่า  
จึงได้ชื่อว่าพระเจ้าอินแบง”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดป่าใหญ่ 2)

“ลูกพระยาเจ้าหมื่นบอนทั้งน้ำหมื่นบอน  
มีจิตครัวในพระพุทธศาสนาให้นาดอนจัน  
เป็นท่านกับวัดพังเพา ... ผู้ได้ยังถอนอกบาน  
เบญจันนัตติรย แลอปายคุณนิย นั้นเทอย”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดครีรัษเกษ)

We could see that the subjects in the sentences were the powerful persons in society such as kings, royal family, Thera monks, and noblemen who were the performer of discourses portraying sacredness or authorities. Moreover, authorized persons frequently used imperative sentences beginning with “Do not” (อย่า) to prevent specific actions, for example:

“ท้าวมาลุน ขุนมาใหม่ อย่าให้มลังพระราชาอาชญา”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดถ้ำสุวรรณคุหา 2)

ท้าวมาลุน ขุนมาใหม่ ผู้ได้อย่ามลัง อย่าริด อย่าถอด  
อย่าถอน ผู้ได้หากมีโภคตันหามาก แลมลังพระราชาอาชญา  
ให้มันผู้นั้นไปใหม่ในออยา”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดคงกระพันชาตรี 1)

ท้าวมาลุน ขุนมาใหม่ อย่ามลัง อย่าริด อย่าถอด  
อย่าถอน อย่ากุ อย่ากวน ผู้ได้มีประกอบด้วย  
ตัณหาศาสนาที่นี่ เอาไปได้มาเนื่องที่เดกีดี  
ให้ขาดท่านวัตถุแห่งเราราให้มันผู้นั้นไปใหม่  
ในออยาทั้ง 4 แม่น้ำพระพุทธเจ้าเกิดมคุกับเมดทิน

เม็ดทรายกีดอย่าให้หันจากออยาทั้ง 4 ด้วยบาปกรรม  
อันมลังทานวัตถุแห่งเรานั้น....”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดถ้ำสุวรรณคุหา 3)

These phrases were found generally in the sentences with purposes to curse persons who intended to occupy the properties of the temple. The sentences would state conditions such as ‘The violators are going to be cursed and fall into the lower realms.’

Although there were cursing sentences, there were also sentences which showed the praying after making merit which asked for what prayer desired in the next life such as to rebirth in the reign of Maitreya, to attain Dhamma, to acquire the 3 happiness and attain nirvana, and others such as:

“ด้วยมีใจประสิทธิ์สภาพ มีใจอันสลด  
ด้วยกุศลปราการนา ขอให้ได้ยังอรหันต์ผลญาณ  
ในอนาคตกาลเบื้องหน้า ในส้านกพระอวิริเมตรรัช  
เจ้าโพธิสัตว์ ขอให้ได้ดังคำมั่น คำปราการนา อย่าคุลอด อย่าคลาด”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดใต้เทิง)

“อาชญาคุรุค มีไส่ศรีรัชชา พาออกตน.....  
กจะโลก ขอให้ได้เลิสุข 3 ประการ มีนิรพานเป็นปัจจัย  
นิพพานปัจจัย โหนตุ เถิงอรหันต์มรรคญาณทุกตน  
ทุกคน กีข้าเทอย”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดศรีชุมชื่น)

“มีหัวครุโถ โภยเป็นเค้า กับลูกเดาศิษย์ยม  
ภายนอกมีสิบร้อย น้อยใหญ่พร้อมกันเลื่อมใสในศาสนา  
พระพุทธเจ้า ตราบต่อเท่า 5 พันพระวัsssa  
ขอให้ถึงสุขเดิลแล้ว เถิงเมืองแก้วนิพพาน กีข้าเทอย”

(ศิลารักษ์วัดไตรภูมิ)

Language appeared in the cursing words and the praying words showed beliefs of Isan people which were intent and faithful to Buddhism. Isan people believed in merit-karma, hell-heaven, nirvana, and the 5 Buddhas. Wishing to meet Maitreya who will be the 5<sup>th</sup> Buddha appearing on Earth in the future, the era of prosperity with peace, happiness, wealth, etc.

## 2. Decoding of political discourses in Isan Stone Inscriptions

Communication is one of the power expressing actions and politics is exercising of power (Kanchana Kaewthep2005: 178). Considering content of the inscription as the codes of communication process in the view of critical linguistics is to look into the content as if it is the reflex of the thoughts, beliefs, and perception of events in society. Political language is the language of power which forge a set of political reality through connections and emphasis of the main ideologies in society. Undergoing distortion and deviation to create Mythology. The main purposes of political language are to request or prevent specific actions from citizen as well as convince listeners to agree with until specific actions are done or prevented. Therefore, political language is not logical language but it is the language of reasoning and referencing with the goal of obtaining righteousness for specific actions.

From the study of Isan Stone Inscriptions of Tai – Lao period, it showed that there were reflections of society context in the period of stone inscription creations including power organizing in society of 3 groups of people; kings and noblemen, the most powerful groups of people, monks, and citizen in the following areas:

### 2.1 Creation of the rules of society

From the study of the stone inscriptions, it was found that Isan Stone Inscriptions of Tai – Lao period had obviously shown the rules, traditions, regulations, and society's guidelines. They were also the sustainability, reinforcement, and inheritance of those rules. The most found rules of the society in Isan Stone Inscriptions of Tai – Lao period were the declaration of non-criminal territory which had shown that the king praised and worshiped Buddhism enough to declare an apology to the temple territory. Namely, any person who had violated the criminal code or laws and fled to the temple which was declared as a non-criminal territory, would be pardoned immediately, for example:

“....มาตราหนึ่ง บพิธเจ้าตนเป็นภูมิบาลปลงลงพระอาชญาไว้ฉบับนี้ บุคคลผู้ไดพิบต์ในพระราชอาชญา แลผิดกฎหมายผิดนัยตัวแล่นเข้ามาในเขตมุจลินทราราม ที่นี้ แม่นว่าป่าทະหนึ่ง เข้า ป่าทະหนึ่งอยู่น่องอกก็ได ห้อ กอภัยชีวิตแก่บุคคลผู้นั้น ผิดควรจะไดลงโทษอย่างรุนแรงต่อไปย่าอย่างรุนแรงต่อไป ให้มีเข้าตอคอกไม้ ผึ้ง เทียน ควรจะแก่แก้วทั้ง 3 แล้วให้เข้าออกมาริจารณาตามคง เมือง ครั้งนี้สิ่งใหม่แล้ว ข้อห้อให้หายเวียกข้อห้อย ไพรีให้หายเวียกไพรี คนผู้ไดทำเวียกผู้นั้น พระราชอาชญาประสิทธิ์ไว้ดังนี้ เพื่อให้เป็น นรทิตถการแก่พระพุทธศาสนา.....ฯลฯ ”

(ศิลปารักษ์กัมมุจลินทราราม)

According to the message above, we could conclude that the king had announced that any person who was sentenced with criminal penalties and committed wrongdoing to his master were going to be pardoned immediately once fled into the area of Mudjalintra Aram temple, even with one foot inside and another outside. Death, imprison or lashing sentences would be refrained. The person only needed to pay respect to Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha with popped rice, flower, and candle. Then, he would be taken into the consideration by society rules, fined, and punished by the minimum punishment. Afterward, the person might serve the temple or work according to his precedence.

According to the message on the stone inscriptions above, we could see that the message was taken as the order of the king which was equal to law and must be abided as the common practice or the rules of the land.

It was noteworthy that most stone inscriptions referred to the ruler classes or kings and the rulers of the land. From 79 stone inscriptions analyzed, most of them had priority on and reinforced religious maintenance missions of the kings which showed that they were characteristics and qualities of the kings who possessed Rajadhamma 10, the desirable characteristics of ruler classes according to the rules of society.

### 2.2 Obtaining righteousness in society

According to the power relations in society as appeared on the stone inscriptions,

especially relations between the rulers and citizen, all showed the unequal relations which were defined by empowered groups of people who intended to obtain righteousness for their own power. At the same time, the intention was to prevent rebellion and resistance from citizen in order to stabilize their governance through discourses.

Strategies to obtain righteousness for the empowered persons and negate righteousness of the powerless persons on Isan Stone Inscriptions were the word processing which concealed and made the unequal relations natural and automatically acceptable without doubt. The most found characteristics of righteousness obtaining strategies used on Isan Stone Inscriptions of Tai – Lao period were the followings: The producing of righteousness for religious institution The announcement of the king of Lan Xang stating a temple the non-criminal territory showed that the power of religious institution had equal or higher power to the king's because the king had praised and admired Buddhism greatly. Additionally, religious institution also had a role to control the behavior of the kings. Moreover, it was also an institution behind the succession of the kings. Therefore, the king had to stabilize his power through religious institution via language strategies which were the wording and cursing used for the person who intended to destroy or take possession of the properties dedicated to the religion, defining that the person might face catastrophe, fell into miserable lower realms after death or had no chance to be born as human ever again. For example:

“.....ບັດນີ້ເຮັດໄດ້ສະໄໝເປັນໄອກາລັກຄາສານາທີ່  
ຕຣາບທ່າ 5 ພັນວັສສາ ທ້າວມາລຸນທຸນນີ້ໃໝ່ອ່າມລ້າງ ອີ່າວິດ  
ອ່າກອດອ່າຄອນອ່າຍຸກອ່າກວານ ຜູ້ໄດ້ນີ້ໂປຣກອບດ້ວຍໂລກ  
ຕັ້ນທາແລ້ມລ້າງຮິດຄອດຄອນຄຸນຊຸມນີ້ທີ່ຈາກຄາສານາທີ່ນີ້ ເຄົາໄປໄດ້  
ມາເຫັນທີ່ໄດ້ກີດຕື່ເຫັດທານວັດຖຸແທ່ງເຮົາໃໝ່ມັນຜູ້ນັ້ນໄປໃໝ່ໃນ  
ອບາຍທີ່ 4 ແມ່ນວ່າພຣະພຸທຣເຈົ້າເກີດມຸກົກົບມືດທີ່ມີເມືດທ່າງກີດ  
ອ່າໃໝ່ພັນຈາກອບາຍທີ່ 4 ດ້ວຍບາປກຽມອັນລ້າງທານວັດຖຸແທ່ງ  
ເຮົານັ້ນ.....”

(ຈາກກັດຄຳສຸວະຮັນຄູ່ທາ 3)

“ທ້າວຸນຜູ້ໄດ້ອ່າຄລຸບອ່າງຝຶງເອາ ທ້າວມາລຸນ ຊຸນມາ  
ໃໝ່ ອ່າໃໝ່ລ້າງພຣະພາຊຸມາ”

(ຄີລາຈາກກັດຄຳສຸວະຮັນຄູ່ທາ 2)

“ເວີຍຈັນທີ່ຜູ້ໄດ້ມີລ້າງ ອາຊຸມາໃໝ່ມັນເປັນຫັກເປັນຕອ  
ໃນສະສາງອູ່ອ່າໃໝ່ເກີດເປັນສັກຫາຕີ”

(ຈາກກັດຮາດຊຸປສມາຮາມ)

From the example above, we could see that the king laid his order with the temple and produced righteousness for Buddhism by having persons serve the temple and preventing anyone from taking possession of them as his own workers or slaves by any mean. The persons might only serve the temple. Violators might fall into the 4 lower realms and had no chance to find Buddhism and reincarnation.

The study of Isan Stone Inscriptions showed the relations and interactions in the power manner of the kings and religious institution which were the two-way relations. Namely, both sides were powerful parties who were interdependent: the king aided religious institution by dedicating food and servants as well as raising religious institution status to be the sacred and powerful institution worthy of worship and to be the non-criminal territory: any person who committed wrongdoing would be pardoned once entered the area. On the other hand, religious institution also enhanced the image of the king by making him the ruler according to Rajadhamma 10, the ruler with good heart, mercy, and the forgiver.

- The producing of righteousness for the kings

Another righteousness producing strategy found on the stone inscriptions was the producing of righteousness for the monarchy by referring to the key persons accepted by the society in the past, for example:

“ຫຼຸດນັສດຸ ພຣະພາຊຸມາ ສມເຕັ້ງບຣມພິຕຣພະເປັນ  
ເຈົາຕົນເປັນພຣະເຊື້ອພຣະວັດທະນນຣມປຣະໂຈຕີ ເສດຕົກຕ້ອສສັນ  
ສຸວະຮັນສມມີທີ່ກັດຕົນສາລະຮາບພິຕຣ ຕົນປະກອບດ້ວຍ ພຣະ  
ຄຣກໂຮນໃນພຣະພຸທຣຄາສານາ ປະສິທິອິຈຸມົງດວງນີ້ໄກບວດນີ້ໂຄຣນໍ້າ

เมือง เขตแดนแต่สมเด็จพระโพธิສัลราชาเจ้า และสมเด็จพระไชย  
เชต្រุธิราชเจ้าตนเป็นปิตาธิราชแห่งพระองค์ “ได้ประสาทีห์”  
(ศิลปารักษ์วัดพระรามน้ำเมือง.)

The message in the inscription above was the order of the Phra Nor Mueang (Reign: 1591-1598) to dedicate the land and food to Nikrodharam Nam Mong Temple with emphasis on the slaves and the land which King Photisarath and King Sai Setthathirath devoted in the past. An important matter was that the claim of being a son of Phra Sai Setthathirath. The action might be a strategy to obtain righteousness for the power of Phra Nor Mueang by displaying desirable characteristics according to the rules of society by devoting to the Buddhism as well as being a son of the great king of the Kingdom of Lan Xang who made merit, and did charity and goodness in the past, in order to support himself as a faithful person to citizen. The king was the person who had power to define content of the message on the stone inscriptions and used Buddhism as a tool to express authority and control unity of people in the society by displaying content or codes about the king who maintained religious institution for the benefits of Thera monks who was respected by and faithful to people. Even if citizen had no power in political, they were still a part that could reinforce power of the ruling class persons by obeying and complying, for example paying taxation without a doubt.

- The producing of righteousness for citizen

Even the processes of righteousness producing in society were made from unequal relations between empowered persons and person under the power, researcher still found from the study of Isan Stone Inscriptions of Tai - Lao Era that there was the hidden process of righteousness producing for citizen as well. According that the king announced major temples the non-criminal territories, it showed the producing of righteousness for citizen, by giving a chance to the wrong doers both the intended and the unintended not to being sentenced to death, which

could be considered as lives giving.

On the other hand, the producing of righteousness for citizen in this manner would help reinforcing power and faith of both monarchy and religious institution at the same time. Namely, citizen would be faithful to the king who was merciful and graceful. They would also praise religious institution as the sanctuary for those who suffered.

Power relations were the complicated relations, comparing to the communication nowadays which both the sender and the receiver have power and have influences among each other. The power as seen on Isan Stone Inscriptions was the expression of power through language by the ruling classes such as the kings, noblemen, and officers who input the codes into the content. The codes were the implied meaning within the message with citizen as the receivers. The intention of it was to make citizen comply and to bring good benefits to the governance.

### Conclusion

Language which does not look like the political language such as the ones on the stone inscriptions may contain political implication in the form of the hidden codes within the content. According to the study of the Isan Stone Inscriptions, it was found that the implied political codes hidden within Isan Stone Inscriptions reflected history of Thai society. The codes were also had influences on the construction, definition, and control of the culture as well. At the same time, they were created, defined, and controlled by society as well. The most obvious code was the power relations which were the unequal relations among different classes of people. However, power relations of monarchy, religious institution, and citizen could not be completely separated since each party had the connection toward each other. Moreover, it could be noticed that religious institution was the connecting join between the kings and citizen, and the religious institution was also a key mechanism to peace governance under the power of ruling class persons.

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