

ABSTRACT

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Dissertation Title: "FEUERBACH'S THEORY OF RELIGIOUS PROJECTION:

**AN EXAMINATION OF RELIGION PRACTICE AMONG THE
KAREN ETHNIC GROUP OF SOUTH EAST ASIA"**

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Ludwig Feuerbach's theory of religious projection is an alternative interpretation of the significance of religion. He posits the meaning of religion starting from the human standpoint as a first reference; this is to say that if humans don't exist neither does religion. . This dissertation examines the theory of Feuerbach as interpreted by two scholars, Marx Wartofsky and Van Harvey who have dedicated much academic research to the subject and in their books push researchers to make a more serious study of the subject.

The various interpretations give some light to the one doing an examination of the Karen understanding of that mysterious being who reveals his relationship with humanity in daily life. One can assert that religion opens a horizon for man searching for understanding and fulfillment of life because, for man the mysterious being is no longer far away but one with which an intimate relationship can be established. Religion provides a framework for self-understanding. For Feuerbach it is a projection of man; others see more than that.

We are living in the world where many people no longer have the belief in the sacredness of things and are less aware of the existence of any mysterious being. This dissertation would like to offer some ideas for a reencounter with this dimension of life. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that in all his travels, he had never come across a people with no religion. Traditionally every culture or way of life managed space and time in such a way that it enabled people to relate to what was transcendent or mysterious in their environment.

This thesis, especially the latter part, is another attempt to highlight the importance of the cultural dimension, not for the purpose of comparison but to interpret its meaning and share this with others. The effort to do this may be a contribution to harmony and dialogue

