

## C231053 : MAJOR ANTHROPOLOGY

KEY WORD : RELIGIOUS CONVERSION/KAREN

PIENGCHIT TIENYOY : RELIGIOUS CONVERSION AMONG THE SGAW KAREN IN A  
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The objective of this thesis was (a) to identify factor leading to conversion to Christianity and Buddhism; (b) to study ethnic identity of Karens after the religious conversion and socio-cultural change.

The study was carried out at Ban Mae To Village Mu 2, Tambol Bo-Kaew, Amphur Samoeng, in Chieng Mai Province. There are 47 households 69 families and 292 populations. The Karen in this village belong to different religious group, i.e., Buddhism, Buddhism with animism, Christianity. This study took 6 months for data collection. Antropological research techniques including participant observation and in-depth interview of key informants were applied.

The study found that the factors leading to conversion of Animism to Buddhism; and Buddhism with Animism were political and socio-psychological ; and factors leading to religious conversion to Christainity were economic and socio-psychological.

This study also found that Karen's traditional belief and their traditional way of life have been changed after the religious conversion. The Karen who called themselves "Pakeayaw" maintained, their ethnic identity based on their belief that all of them are descendents from the same Karen ancestors. Therefore, their love and cohesion, as well as their willingness to help each others continue to be practiced among Karen people.