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This thesis aims to study beliefs and practices of the Sufi Muslim groups in Thailand. The study is based on the review of Islamic literature, the Qur'an, the Hadith and related documents, and an interview and observation of the Sufi groups throughout Thailand.

The Islamic literature shows that Sufism is a system of religious beliefs and practices of Muslims oriented towards inner purification till it reaches the state of unification with God . The story of Sufism is still controvercial in terms of its wording and origin in relation to various religious and philosophical traditions as well as its Islamic status.

It is found from the field study that the coming of Sufism in Thailand has gained influence from Muslims in countries in contact with Thailand in a long course of history since the Ayuttaya dynasty . The Sufi Muslims in Thailand are called Tareekat from Tarigah in Arabic, which means the way . These Tareekat Muslims are divided in to 3 groups. The largest groups are the Shaziliyyah the Qadiriyyah and the Ahmadiyyah respectively.

In terms of beliefs and practices the 3 groups claimed their beliefs and practices to be the true Islam which comes from the Quran and the Sunna, the Prophetic Tradition .

Similaly they give the most importance to inner practices, respect to the group leader, the transference of leadership and the relation between the leader and deciples . The major differences between the Sufi groups are mostly in miscellaneous practices, especially about the Dua, the prayer for blessings from God. The relationships among the 3 groups and between these 3 groups and with non-Tareekat Muslims are smooth. in spite of their criticism of each other and also with non-tareekat on some claims for being the true Islamic ideas and practices.

Thus it can be said that the religious features of Sufism in Thailand are complex. They reflect diversity in religious needs and attitudes. The phenomena conforms with the development of Sufism in the history of Islam .