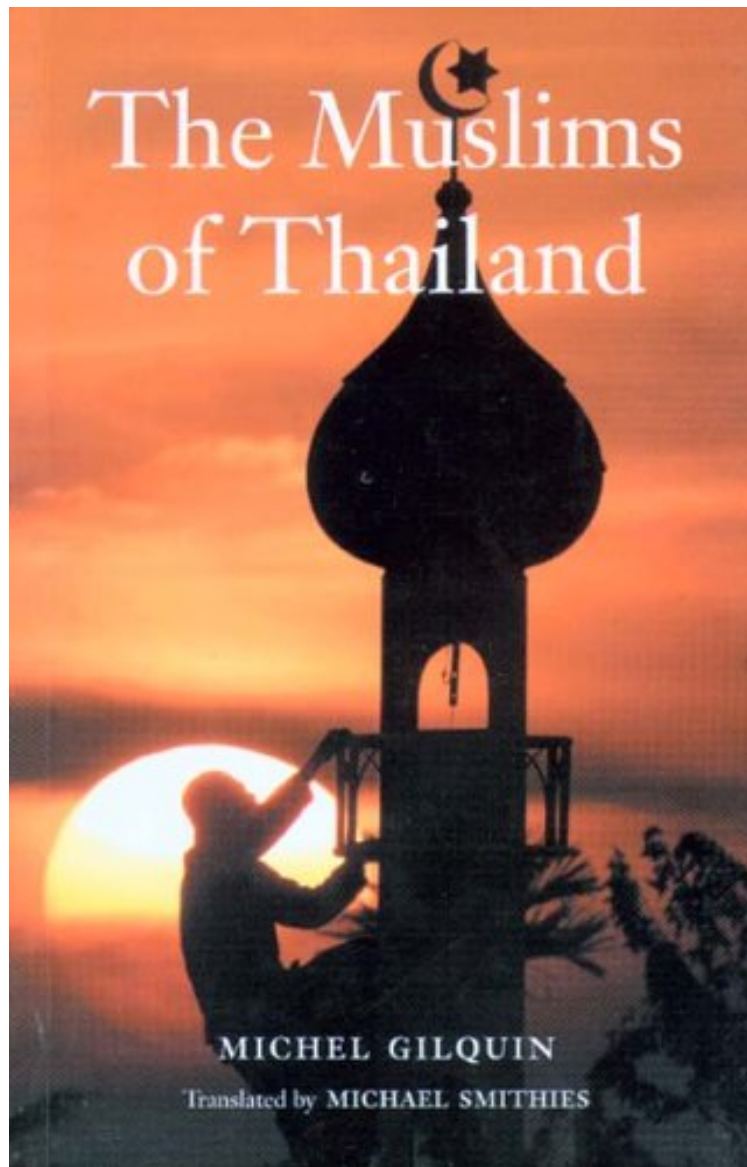


(Mobile book) The Muslims of Thailand

## The Muslims of Thailand

*Michel Gilquin*

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**Michel Gilquin : The Muslims of Thailand** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Muslims of Thailand:

Thailand is usually closely associated with Buddhism, but since 1998 the country has been one of the observer members of the Islamic Conference Organization, and senior figures in the present and previous governments have

been Muslim. Some 8 percent of the population is Muslim, and in the three southernmost provinces of the country they constitute a majority. Islam is ever more visible in Bangkok, where the demographic increase of Muslims is marked. Michel Gilquin, a sociologist specializing in the study of Muslim societies and a resident of Morocco, examines the origins of Islam in the kingdom of Siam, Muslim integration into the Thai nation, and the effects of globalization and modernity on a mostly traditional and rural community. In particular he considers the weight of history of the old sultanate of Patani on the present-day Yawi-speaking majority in Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani, and the circumstances leading to "the troubles" which erupted in 2004 and which, alas, continue. Without proposing any solutions, the book explains the background to the present impasse, and considers how far integration of the minority has been, and can be, successful.

From Publishers Weekly Although Thailand is most obviously known as a Theravada Buddhist country, it has a sizable Muslim minority of up to 8% of the population, and Muslims are the majority in three southern provinces. Muslims are also increasingly represented at the highest levels of Thai government. Translated by Michael Smithies from a 2002 French publication, the book has been expanded and revised by Gilquin, a researcher at the Center for Social Science and Humanities in Rabat, Morocco. The prose is formal and sometimes stilted, but the information is solid and often fascinating. Gilquin traces the origins of Islam in Thailand, then explores the religious characteristics of Thai. Thai Muslims are surprisingly heterogeneous, though Gilquin notes the increasing visibility of more conservative or orthodox Muslims in Thailand, as elsewhere. (June) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Michel Gilquin specializes in the study of Islamic societies and is a researcher at the Center for Social Science and Humanities in Rabat, Morocco. Michael Smithies, resident of Thailand, has translated and edited many volumes from French.