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**Ghostly Crowds in Peripheral Film History: Thailand's 16mm 'versioned' Quickies**

A little known detail about the history of cinema in Thailand is the unusual longevity of its 'versioned' screening practice. Even until the late 1960s it was commonplace for a team of *nak phaak* (or 'versionists' as they referred to themselves in English) to provide live voice performances, from the equivalent of a broom cupboard, to accompany the film. Proceeding from the impact on film form of this improvisatory mode of oral performance, I will theorise the experience of popular Thai films of the Cold War period. These films were shot quickly on location as 'silent' (to be voiced during the projection), on what was dismissed at the time as 'sub-standard' 16mm stock. Their emblematic image, as my paper will propose, is of the bystanders, incidentally captured as they gathered to watch the event of filmmaking; crowds preserved within the very same frame as a soundless recording of the stars. What do we make of the fact that the film strip registering this contingent detail did not end up on the cutting room floor? Surviving on severely deteriorated silent film prints – now 're-dubbed' and compressed on VCD and DVD for distribution on the market stall circuit – what kind of media archaeology can do justice to these silent ghosts?