

Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies

ISSN 1710-8268

<https://thecjbs.org/>

Number 16, 2021

A Study of Chinese Lay Buddhist Societies in Thailand: History and Current State

Yaoping Liu

Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand

Copyright Notice: Digital copies of this work may be made and distributed provided no change is made and no alteration is made to the content. Reproduction in any other format, with the exception of a single copy for private study, requires the written permission of the author. All enquiries to: yaoping.l@mail.rmutk.ac.th.

A Study of Chinese Lay Buddhist Societies in Thailand: History and Current State

Yaoping Liu

RAJAMANGALA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY KRUNGTHEP

Abstract

In Theravada-dominated Thailand, there have existed a number of lay Buddhist societies self-organized by Chinese migrants since the early decades of the twentieth century. Besides faithfully upholding Mahāyāna doctrine and practice, these societies also built up multiple trans-regional religious networks with various Buddhist communities across Southeast Asia, particularly from the 1950s through the 1970s. This paper investigates the history and current state of Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Thailand. It will specifically refer to two such societies in Bangkok: the Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand and the Siam Dragon-flower Buddhist Society.

Keywords: Thailand, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Chinese Lay Buddhist Societies, Trans-regional Religious Networks, History, and Current State

Introduction

Theravada Buddhism has not just uninterruptedly served the Thai (or Siamese) monarchy as its ruling ideology since the late thirteenth century,¹ but has also served as the basis for many local beliefs and practices in Thailand.² From the second half of the nineteenth century down to the first three decades of the twentieth century, this Theravada-dominated country received an unprecedented influx of Chinese migrants, much like other territories in the region.³ Chinese migrants brought deities from their respective home districts of China to Thailand, as well as to other hosting countries in Southeast Asia, for religious blessings and communal bonds.⁴ These actions substantially contributed to the southward dissemination of Chinese folk religions and Mahāyāna Buddhism across the region.

After accumulating enough economic and political strength in Thailand, the Chinese diaspora community built a large number of temples and shrines to worship various patron deities imported from the motherland or for locally-invented deities and spirits for piety and protection. Between 1871 and 1879, the Hakka Chinese community financed the building of Dragon-lotus Temple (Longlian si 龍蓮寺 / Thai: Wat

¹ Hoskin, *History of Thailand*, 14-5.

² Pongsapich, "Chinese Settlers," 13.

³ Sng and Bisalputra, *A History of the Thai-Chinese*, 156-209.

⁴ Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, 57.

Mangkong Kamalawa), the first Mahāyāna temple in Bangkok's Chinatown, and then petitioned the Thai Royal Court to recognize the Chinese settler monks assembled in this temple despite their foreign origin.⁵ This eventually consolidated the Chinese Sangha as one of four Buddhist *nikāyas* (or schools) in Thailand, which henceforth became known as the Jin Nikaya (hereafter JN)—“Jin” being the Thai word for “Chinese.” Chinese community leaders supported JN's continued expansion in the following decades.⁶ This Chinese Buddhist school has remained active up to today, along with the mainstream Thai Theravada-oriented Maha Nikaya and Dhammayuttika Nikaya, as well as another Mahāyāna school, the Annam Nikaya, which was formed by Vietnamese settler-monks who arrived in the 1790s—several decades earlier than their Chinese counterparts.⁷

After the promulgation of the Angyi Act against Chinese secret societies in 1898, Thailand saw a booming registration of various Chinese associations and guilds from the early 1900s onwards.⁸ Some of these Chinese associations directly derived from the formerly shadowy secret societies in Thailand. For instance, Poh Deck Tung Foundation, the largest charitable organization in Thailand was indeed initiated by a Teochew triad boss named Tae Teeyong well known as Yi Goh Hong (Second

⁵ Liu, “Jin Nikaya,” 27-28.

⁶ Liu, “The History of Jin Nikaya in Thailand,” 135-138.

⁷ Buddhiso and Thangto, “Annam Nikaya Buddhism,” 5-6.

⁸ Sng and Bisalputra, *A History of the Thai-Chinese*, 236-237.

Brother Hong) and his merchant associates in 1909.⁹ Given their triad-oriented origin, Chinese associations were often seen applying violent methods in settling their economic, social, and political disputes.¹⁰

In this trending socio-political circumstance, through the 1920s and 1930s, Chinese lay Buddhists from different dialect-groups in Thailand started self-organizing as societies for doctrinal studies and ritual observation, as well as other meritorious activities such as social charity. They registered with the Thai Ministry of Interior as civil associations (Thai: *samakhon*), bearing the vision and mission to serve their own spiritual needs and promote Mahāyāna teachings among interested Chinese settlers. In the name of Buddhism, both the leadership and ordinary members of these societies were expected to restrain their economic and political ambitions, if not at all times, at least during religious gatherings. This factor distinguished them from the above-mentioned Chinese associations, which also registered as *samakhons*, but primarily for economic, social, and political reasons. At the same time, the Chinese lay Buddhist societies also differed from Buddhist temples or *wats* in terms of both socio-religious functions and legality since the latter are now registered with the Thai Ministry of Culture.¹¹

The exact number of Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Thailand remains unknown, due to the lack of official or unofficial records, but is thought to be around fourteen in the Bangkok area according to a memoir

⁹ Poh Teck Tung Foundation was just one of the large philanthropic donations by Yi Goh Hong. After he self-enriched by serving the Thai Royal Court as one of its prominent tax farmers in opium, liquor, and gambling in northern and central Thailand during the last decade of the nineteenth century, this triad boss donated money to build Chinese schools, hospitals, and cemeteries to help Chinese settlers. See also Sng and Bisalputra, *A History of the Thai-Chinese*, 283, 294.

¹⁰ Ownby, "Secret Societies Reconsidered," 13-14.

¹¹ Katoka, "Religion as Non-Religion," 465.

published by JN in 1971.¹² Today, most of these societies are not traceable due to Bangkok's extensive infrastructural building and re-building for the city's development over the past decades. Mr. Somchai Kwangtongpanich, a noted researcher on Chinese heritage in Thailand who is now in his early seventies, suggests that there might be far more than fourteen Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Bangkok if the unregistered and short-lived ones are counted.¹³ All the same, only a few of these are active today. For this study I managed to locate and visit three societies with Somchai's help. They comprise the Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand (hereafter CBRST), the Dragon-flower Buddhist Society of Siam (hereafter DBSS), and the Lotus-flower Buddhist Society (hereafter LFBS).

The Harvard-based scholar, Holmes Welch, categorized the lay Buddhist societies in China, blossoming in the 1930s and 1940s, into three main types—"learning" or "research societies" (*xue* 學 or *yanjiu she* 研究社), "merit clubs" (*gongde lin* 功德林), and "pure karma" or "lotus societies" (*jingye* 淨業 or *lian she* 蓮社).¹⁴ Based on this typology and the findings from my fieldwork, both the CBRST and DBSS belong to the category of "learning" or "research societies," while the LFBS obviously falls in the category of "lotus societies." Notwithstanding, the findings of this study suggest that the LFBS was actually developed from a Daoist shrine and re-

¹² Huazong, *Special Volume*, 67-92.

¹³ Mr. Somchai Kwangtongpanich provided this information at my interview with him in Bangkok's Chinatown on September 3, 2020.

¹⁴ According to Holmes Welch, "learning societies" (*xueshe*) were organized by educated lay Buddhists who met periodically to discuss sacred texts or to attend lectures by visiting monks or knowledgeable members; "merit clubs" (*gongde lin*) comprised of vegetarianism advocates who believed that the avoidance of eating meat itself was highly meritorious; and "pure karma" or "lotus societies" (*jingye* or *lianshe*) consisted of those dedicated to reciting the Buddha's name. See Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 73-77.

puted, since the early 1930s, for its spiritual mediumship and other popular Daoist practices.¹⁵ Thus, I decided to focus my attention on the CBRST and DBSS, given the extended history of strong affiliation of the LFBS with Daoism.

Scholars have often limited the study of “Southeast Asian Buddhism” to a focus on mainstream Theravada Buddhism. For instance, Donald Swearer’s work, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, focuses only on Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.¹⁶ Patana Kitiarsa, in his state-of-the-field article, likewise limits the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism to Theravada Buddhism.¹⁷ While Anne Ruth Hansen’s article on “Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia” focuses on Buddhist reform movements of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, she does recognize the existence of a vibrant Mahāyāna minority in Malaysia.¹⁸ On the whole, the above-mentioned scholarship has failed to recognize the longtime existence of Chinese Buddhist traditions in Southeast Asia. Also overlooked has been Buddhism’s significance within Chinese communities across this region as a distinct subset of “Southeast Asian Buddhism,” insofar as it has been submerged within Theravada Buddhism.

In his newly published work, *Monk in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea*, Singaporean scholar Jack Meng-Tat Chia has

¹⁵ On my visit to the LFBS on February 2, 2021, Ms. Suvimol Mahagisiri, the current secretary of this society, reported that they organized the elaborate ceremony to worship Heaven and Earth on Chinese New Year eve, as a tradition in which local or foreign-born Chinese spiritual mediums were usually invited for fortune telling at this annual event. Ms. Suvimol is a third-generation local-born Teochew Chinese.

¹⁶ Swearer, *The Buddhist World*, 12.

¹⁷ Kitiarsa, “Beyond the Weberian Trails,” 200.

¹⁸ Hansen, “Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia,” 238.

given attention to the spread of Buddhism from China to Singapore, Muslim-majority Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Catholic Philippines. In Chia's formulation, diasporic Chinese clerics and laity built up various forms of Buddhism and trans-regional religious networks, particularly across the South China Sea.¹⁹ But Chia gives less attention to the role that Buddhism of Chinese traditions played in Chinese communities of Mainland Southeast Asia where Theravada Buddhism is dominant in local intellectual and religious history. In Thailand, then, JN has exemplified an institutional form of Chinese Buddhism, with its system of teachings, rituals, clerics, and adjunct organizations. In addition, ever since the arrivals of Chinese migrants, there have been other forms of Chinese Buddhism, but in a fragmentary form and with less influence.

Focusing on the CBRST and DBSS in Thailand, in what follows, I describe the practices these Chinese lay Buddhist societies apply in serving the dynamic religious needs of their members from the 1930s down to today. I also attempt to draw out the multiple trans-regional religious networks that they have built with the various Buddhist communities in China and other Southeast Asian countries. This study is thus intended to establish a narrative of Chinese lay Buddhist societies throughout their history and in present-day Bangkok and Thailand as a whole.

Sources and Methods

This paper is based on a range of sources, including commemorative books (*jinian kan* 紀念刊), periodicals, unpublished temple records, epigraphic materials, and oral or printed biographical accounts. Additionally, a series

¹⁹ Chia, *Monks in Motion*, 24-30, 36-44.

of interviews with the current leaders, managers, and some of the members of the three aforementioned societies, were conducted. Most of these talks were carried out in both Mandarin Chinese and regional Chinese dialects, and sometimes in English. In addition, my informal conversations with local experts on Chinese heritage, such as Mr. Somchai Kwangtongpanich, have offered valuable supplementary insights, and diverse perspectives beyond the above-mentioned sources. I am very grateful for their heartfelt support.

Regrettably, my lack of Thai proficiency has prevented me from accessing sources written or orally circulated in the Thai language. It should also be noted that I have chosen *pinyin* as the primary Romanization for Chinese characters throughout this paper due to the difficulty of tracing their exact phonetic information in regional Chinese dialects; doing so also eliminates the possibility of transcriptional errors. Some names and organizations in the Wade-Giles system remain unchanged, due to their continuing usage among Thais and Westerners. For example, Hsing Yun, Ching Hsin, and Chuk Mor.

The respondents in this study either do not have Chinese names or remember only their clan names such as Chen 陳 (or Tan), Lin 林 (or Lim), and so on. They simply provided their Thai names or, in some cases, preferred remaining anonymous. I refer to the Thai Royal Academy's "General System of Phonetic Transcription" to Romanize the Thai names and words here.

CBRST—The Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand

The CBRST is currently located at 215/1 Mitreejit Road (opposite Wat Plupplachai), Khet Klong Samwa, Bangkok. It was founded by Du Shaoting

杜少亭 (?-1937), a Teochew Chinese from Chaozhou, in 1930. The oral account suggests that Shaoting was a Mahāyāna follower who strictly observed the Five Precepts for the Buddhist laity. In 1920, Shaoting migrated to Bangkok for the sake of his career, where he made a fortune after years of hard work as a labourer, shopkeeper, and then grocer, owning several shops in Bangkok's Chinatown.²⁰ Despite his demanding business schedule, Shaoting often made time for doctrinal studies, and led others in the Teochew community of similar faith in chanting Mahāyāna sūtras. With the support of several Teochew Chinese business families, particularly the Chen 陳 and Li 李 families, Shaoting registered the CBRST by 1931, and gathered a sizeable number of members from Chinese communities at a rented house in Bangkok's Chinatown for Mahāyāna doctrinal studies and ritual observation.²¹ Shaoting served the CBRST as its president for six years until his death in early 1937.



²⁰ Based on an interview with Ms. Wanna Charuwansopa, the incumbent secretary of the CBRST, at the office of this society on August 23, 2020. Wanna is a third-generation Teochew Chinese bearing the Chinese surname of Chen or Tan in Teochew pronunciation. Her late father was a senior member of this society.

²¹ *Taiquo Zhonghua Fojiao yanjiu she chengli 11 zhounian*, 25-28.

Fig.1: A portrait of Du Shaoting (center) and his two successors hung in their memory on the rear side of the CBRST main gate (the photo was taken by the author on August 23, 2020).

Upon Shaoting's demise in 1937, representatives from the Chen and Li families took over the leadership of the CBRST. Chen Muchan 陳幕禪 (dates unknown), a noted practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, and Chen Mingde 陳明德 (dates unknown), a rice trader, were installed in turn as CBRST presidents from 1937 to 1944, while Li Yiheng 李軼恆 (dates unknown) or Upāsaka Qinglin 青林 and Li Shuliang 李叔亮 (1913-1987), both from the well-off Li family, served as secretary-general and financial director of the society.²² These gentlemen were either first or second-generation descendants of Teochew-speaking Chinese migrants. They were well educated and joined Shaoting from the start due to their common interest in Mahāyāna doctrine. Among them, Yiheng was a well-known poet with his own poetry society, named after his Dharma name, Qinglin. He was often seen entertaining his Dharma friends with poems he had composed.²³ It was reported that Yiheng had even lobbied Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983), a prodigious Chinese painter and Buddhist devotee, to become one of the few honourable members of the CBRST managerial council.²⁴ Even today, the CBRST has several works of art gifted by Daqian. It should be noted that the personal successes and social connections of the senior members of the CBRST, such as Yiheng and others, emboldened the CBRST to contact Buddhist individuals and institutions across the Southeast Asian region for advice and cordial exchanges, as discussed below.

²² *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 11 zhounian*, 45-47.

²³ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 56-59.

²⁴ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 18.

The CBRST reached its peak after Chen Kewen 陳克文 (1895-1968) became its president in 1943. Kewen was born to a wealthy Teochew Chinese family running several pawnshops in Bangkok's Chinatown. His father, Chen Yaoshou 陳耀壽 (dates unknown), was a faithful follower of Dixian 諦閑 (1858-1932), the renowned master of Tiantai School in the Republic of China.²⁵ Kewen made major moves after assuming the presidency. The first was to seek a new location for the CBRST, inasmuch as the rented site, mentioned earlier, could not contain the society's growing number of members for gatherings. The second move was to launch regular weekend Dharma seminars. And the third was to extend trans-regional networks with Buddhist communities in Sri Lanka and Penang, Malaysia.



Fig.2: Kewen, in white suit, sitting at the center of the first row with his family (retrieved from the CBRST archive).

²⁵ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhouniann*, 89.

In a prologue for the commemorative book published in 1951 on the CBRST's twenty-first anniversary, Kewen stated that all the members had long dreamed of obtaining a spacious site for the society, and he spent seven years making it happen, from 1944 to 1951.²⁶ Yiheng, in remarks conveying his gratitude, and collected in the same commemorative book, reported that the land of the current CBRST office had actually been purchased by Kewen's personal fortune as a donation to the society.²⁷ At the completion of the construction and interior decoration on February 8, 1951, a ceremonial consecration was organized with the JN monks presiding over the event.



Fig.3: A photo taken in front of the entrance gate of the CBRST after the 1951 ceremonial consecration (retrieved from the CBRST archive).²⁸

²⁶ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian* , 10.

²⁷ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian* , 13.

²⁸ In this photo, Changyi, the Fifth Patriarch of the Jin Nikaya, is seated in the middle of first row in his full set of ceremonial robes. With him are Pujing, who later succeeded

As seen in the above photo, the CBRST built a stepped roof for its great hall in a style that is typical of Theravada Buddhist temples in Thailand and other Buddhist countries of Mainland Southeast Asia. This deliberate adaptation indicates that Chinese Buddhists in Thailand had culturally integrated into the mainstream Theravada tradition of their host country, if not in practice, then at least in appearance. As Ms. Weena Anantnakin, the current vice president of the CBRST, has said, since the society's establishment until today, it has often organized its members to observe local Buddhist festivals and make offerings to Theravada monks from neighbouring Thai temples for merit.²⁹ Nevertheless, the CBRST has stuck to the Mahāyāna bodhisattva ideology, and it follows the typical Chinese custom of ancestor-worship by setting up a space for the soul-tablets of its deceased members. Needless to say, by offering a place for remembering the deceased, the CBRST further strengthens solidarity among its members.

him as the Sixth Patriarch (second from left in the first row) and three young monks from this school. See also Liu, "The History of Jin Nikaya in Thailand," 145-146.

²⁹ Ms. Weena in her late sixties, whose late father was one of the senior CBRST members in the 1940s, gave this information in our interview at the CBRST office on September 25, 2020.



Fig.4: One of hundreds of soul-tablets installed at the Rebirth Hall, behind the Great Shrine Hall of the CBRST. Included here is Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, or Earthly Treasury, one of the four major Bodhisattvas in Chinese Buddhist tradition, who is dedicated to the salvation of hell-beings (the photo was taken by the author on September 25, 2020).

Under Kenwen's leadership from 1943, the CBRST launched regular weekend study seminars on multiple sutras that were popular in different Chinese Buddhist traditions ranging from the Chan and Pure Land traditions to the Tiantai tradition. Every Saturday, senior members, such as Muchan and Mingde, as well as Kewen himself and others, in turn led the seminars. Muchan was very good at speaking on Chan topics, while Mingde's lectures on the "Three Pure Land Sutras" were popular among CBRST members of that time.³⁰ Occasional seminars were also organized to celebrate Buddhist festivals or to honour visiting monks. For instance, Huang Jinliang 黃謹良 (dates unknown), who had translated the Thai Buddhist Tripitaka into the Chinese language, was one of the guest lecturers for the CBRST on Buddhist festivals observed in the Thai tradition. As a

³⁰ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 54.

local-born Teochew descendant, Jingliang preferred giving his lectures in the Teochew dialect rather than Mandarin Chinese in order to reach a broader audience among those CBRST members who enthusiastically stuck to this dialect in daily communication.³¹ Hsing Yun 星雲 (1927-) and Ching Hsin 淨心 (1929-2020), two Taiwan-based Chinese monks who participated in the first official Taiwan Buddhist delegation to Thailand in 1963, were both invited to give public lectures for the local Chinese Buddhist laity at this society.³² The CBRST seminars continue today, but they now take place only occasionally, and only in the Thai language. Most of the time, these seminars are taught by local-born monks from the Annam Nikaya, the Vietnamese Mahāyāna section mentioned previously.³³

³¹ Ms. Pornthip Phornprapha in her late seventies, whom I interviewed at the CBRST office on September 27, 2020, has been an active member and regular participant in CBRST seminars from a young age. She recalls how popular the lectures taught by Huang Jingliang and others in the Teochew dialect were in the 1950s and 1960s.

³² Hsin, *Records on Overseas Buddhist Visits*, 45-47.

³³ In our phone conversation on September 26, 2020, Ms. Weena explained that there were no qualified members in the CBRST after Muchan, Mingde, and others had passed away by the 1970s. Current members of the society, most of whom were born during or after the 1950s, cannot understand the teachings either in Mandarin Chinese or in the Teochew dialect. Weena added that the monks from the Annam Nikaya, whom the CBRST often invited for public lectures, were educated in Taiwanese Buddhist colleges, were believed to understand Mahāyāna doctrine.



Fig.5: Chen Muchan lectures on the Platform of the Sixth Patriarch at the CBRST Seminar Hall on January 15, 1950 (retrieved from the CBRST archive).

Besides organizing weekend Buddhist seminars, the CBRST, under Kewen, also formed a self-help liturgical team to serve the ritual needs of its members. The liturgical team, mainly consisted of female members from this society, who performed most of the routine rituals on Chinese Buddhist festivals, such as the sacred birthdays of bodhisattvas. However, for major events, in which certain sophisticated rituals were necessary, monks were often invited. For instance, in the Ritual of Rescuing the Flaming-Mouthed Hungry Ghost in the Chinese Ghost Festival (Yulanpen jie 盂蘭盆節),³⁴ customarily held by the CBRST around the fifteenth day of every seventh month in the Chinese lunar calendar, monks with ritual expertise from the JN were usually invited to preside over the proceedings.³⁵ The CBRST liturgical team continues today. Its constituents are all in their seventies, but they maintain a high level of enthusiasm toward serving the religious needs of their community.

³⁴ Szczepanski, "Ghost Festival Rituals," 37-60.

³⁵ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 47.



Fig. 6: The current CBRST liturgical team, in black lay robes, performing devotion for Amitābha Buddha at the society's Great Shrine Hall (the photo was taken by the author on September 25, 2020).

Under Kewen, the CBRST had networked Buddhist individuals and institutions across Southeast Asia, especially in the early 1950s. Among the transregional communications that the CBRST carried out during that period, the most productive turned into a close relationship with the World Fellowship of Buddhists (hereafter WFB) based in Sri Lanka at that time. The WFB proclaimed itself the first authentic world Buddhist organization, founded by Dr. Malalasekrea, a noted Sinhalese Buddhist activist coming after Dharmapala in 1950.³⁶ Malalasekrea visited Thailand in early 1951 under the CBRST's invitation for the inaugural ceremony of its new site. He was accompanied by Fafang 法舫 (1904-1951), one of the prominent disciples of Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), the famed Chinese Buddhist re-

³⁶ Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 64.

formist of the Republican era. Fafang was a lecturer of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the University of Ceylon at that time, whose lectureship on this Buddhist island was critical to Taixu's efforts in internationalizing Mahāyāna Buddhism and building a worldwide network of Buddhist.³⁷ To venerate these two important visitors, the CBRST granted them membership in its managerial council, and organized a series of seminars in their honour for local Chinese Buddhists.³⁸ With the support of the CBRST, Malalasekrea successfully established the first overseas branch of the WFB in Bangkok on April 9, 1951, and was honoured by an audience with the then Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, Prince Chuen Navavongs Sucitto.



Fig.7: A photo taken after Malalasekrea (fourth from the right) and Fafang (third from the left) visited the Thai Supreme Patriarch at Wat Bowonniwet (retrieved from the CBRST archive).

³⁷ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 98; see also Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 63.

³⁸ *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 56-58.

Interestingly, the headquarters of the WFB was shifted to Bangkok by 1963, after the Thai princess, Poon Pismai Diskul, was elected as its president that year.³⁹ From then down to today, control of this organization has been in Thai hands. Thais are proud that they re-introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the 1870s after seeing the Lankan Buddhist Order disintegrating as a result of more than three centuries of political chaos.⁴⁰ Hence, they have now come to believe that they deserve the prestige of hosting and leading the WFB, even though they had long sought advice from the Lankan Sangha in earlier history.⁴¹ But nobody seems to remember that it was the CBRST that brought this worldwide Buddhist organization to Thailand. Under Kewen, the CBRST's religious networks also extended to the Malay peninsula. On the CBRST's twenty-first anniversary, the Buddhist Association of Penang dispatched a delegation of three senior members to congratulate their Thailand counterparts' success.⁴²

Kewen passed away in 1968 but had already bestowed the presidency of the CBRST on Li Shuliang, who had served the society as financial director and then vice president since 1943. Compared with Kewen, Shuliang was quite meticulous and somewhat timid about launching anything new.⁴³ He tried his best to sustain Kewen's legacy in his eight years as president, from 1968 to 1976, but with very limited success. Indeed, the membership of the CBRST had decreased from more than twenty-five hundred to fewer than eight hundred by 1976, according to Ms. Kachana

³⁹ The World Buddhist Fellowship, "History," <http://wfbhq.org/about-history.php>, accessed October 1, 2020.

⁴⁰ Dewaraja, "Thailand's Sublime Gift to Sri Lanka," 81-89.

⁴¹ Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 40.

⁴² *Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian*, 63.

⁴³ Ms. Weena gave this information in my interview with her on October 5, 2020.

Chuenpanichayakul (or Chen Bingfeng 陳秉芬), Kewen's daughter.⁴⁴ Seeing this happening, the senior members of the CBRST elected Kachana as their new president in 1977, with a belief that members of the Chen family were more capable of leading. As a pious daughter, Kachana put great effort into society affairs with the dream of restoring the prosperity and influence that the CBRST had enjoyed under her father. Realizing the unfortunate fact that most locally-born Chinese descendants had by that time lost their capacity for the Chinese language, Kachana launched Thai-language seminars, but immediately found difficulty in obtaining enough qualified lecturers. This is the essential reason that the society approached Thai-speaking Annam Nikaya monks, who, as mentioned earlier, are educated in Taiwan. As a result, the CBRST seminars, the signature practice of this society, soon became sporadic, indeed, virtually ceased.

Kachana, the current CBRST president, has served in that role for more than forty years. Despite her consistent dedication to the society's wellbeing, membership in the CBRST has now dropped to 534. To strengthen the commitment of current members, Kachana has even invited a Chinese teacher to teach Chinese popular songs with the aim of making the society's gatherings more entertaining. However, such efforts have not reversed the society's fortunes. According to Wanna, secretary of the CBRST, some CBRST members have turned to Taiwanese missionary temples for spiritual meaning in recent years.⁴⁵ The Taiwanese missionaries, especially those sent by Fo Guang Shan and Chung Tai Chan Monastery, have long attempted to draw "religious customers" from the local Chinese community through sophisticated rituals and various training programs

⁴⁴ Ms. Kachana, in her early eighties, made this statement in my interview with her at the CBRST office on September 27, 2020. She was educated in Hong Kong and speaks fluent English.

⁴⁵ Wanna reported this fact in my interview with her at the CBRST office on August 23, 2020.

in Chinese arts.⁴⁶ They have successfully recruited a growing number of locally influential Chinese Buddhists as members of their Dharma Protecting Council for financial and political support. Kachana and her associates realize the challenges posed by the Taiwanese missionaries, but nothing can really be done to reverse this situation.⁴⁷ The membership of the CBRST today is mainly limited to those who joined the society through the interest of their parents or grandparents in the 1970s and 1980s. They maintain strong emotional ties with the CBRST and continue to support it.

In summary, CBRST was founded for Buddhist doctrinal studies and had established a good reputation for its Buddhist seminars from the time of its founding in 1930, up through the 1970s. Thanks to the great dedication of knowledgeable senior members such as Mingde, Muchan, Kewen and others, the weekend seminars organized by this society had achieved tremendous popularity among the local Chinese Buddhists, especially during Kewen's presidency. However, its family-based managerial leadership approach, maintained from the beginning, may have hindered leaders after Kewen's time from exploring more innovative ways of running the society. Kachana and her predecessor put their efforts into maintaining Kewen's legacy rather than keeping up with the dynamic needs of the Thai-Chinese religious market; otherwise, the Taiwanese Buddhist missionaries could never have succeeded in drawing away its members. What impresses me the most in this study is that CBRST has made admirable efforts in maintaining Mahāyāna doctrinal studies as its primary practice from the very beginning, mindfully distancing itself

⁴⁶ Liu, "The History of Jin Nikaya in Thailand," 157-158.

⁴⁷ In our second interview, on October 25, 2020, Kachana said that she tried hard to maintain the CBRST's traditional practices and created some activities that she thought would be interesting.

from the perceived pursuit of activities directed to realizing material profits so popular among many Buddhist institutions in Thailand.⁴⁸

DBSS—The Dragon-flower Buddhist Society of Siam

The DBSS is now located at 140/5 Soi Ban Bat, Luang Road Pom Prap Sattru OPhai, Bangkok. It was founded by another group of Teochew-speaking Chinese Buddhists, headed by a rich goldsmith named Deng Yucheng 鄧玉成 (dates unknown) in 1934.⁴⁹ Yu Cheng emigrated from China to Thailand in 1925 and made his fortune after years of hard work. Like the CBRSS, the DBSS mandate was directed to both the study and propagation of Mahāyāna doctrine within the Chinese community of Bangkok. Initially, the members of this society rented a wooden shed on Yaowarat Road in Bangkok's Chinatown. After fifteen years of considerable effort under seven generations of leaders, from 1934 to 1949, the DBSS eventually built its current official complex, comprising one two-storied main hall and two single-storied attached halls made from concrete.⁵⁰ By 1951, when the DBSS was under the guidance of its seventh president, Lin Derun 林德潤 (1897-1968), another Teochew Chinese from an established business family, membership in this society had reached two thousand, comparable to the contemporary CBRST.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the membership of

⁴⁸ Kitiarsa, *Mediums, Monks, and Amulets*, 7.

⁴⁹ *Taixu dashi sheli anta jinian kan*, 67.

⁵⁰ Besides President Deng Yucheng, the leaders of DBSS, from its establishment until 1958, included, in turn: Chen Ligong, Ma Ziming, Lin Lairong, Deng Dinggui, Zhang Shaoji, and Lin Derun. This is according to Mr. Pravitt Pichitnapakul, bearing the Chinese clan-name Lin (or Lim), the current and twenty-eighth president of this society, whom I interviewed at his office on October 29, 2020.

⁵¹ *Taixu dashi sheli anta jinian kan*, 69-73.

this society has declined to around four hundred today.⁵² To survive, the DBSS had to turn its spacious front yard into a parking lot for income to maintain daily operations.



Fig.8: The DBSS Main Hall with a Thai-styled steeped roof (the photo was taken by the author on October 30, 2020).

Besides doctrinal studies, the DBSS has been renowned for its worship of Guanyin. A thousand-hand gilded Guanyin statue, which the DBSS claims to have modelled after the popular style of the Xuande reign (1426-1435) of the Ming Dynasty, sits alone in a full lotus position in the Grand

⁵² According to Mr. Sakon Pichitnapakul, the current secretary of DBSS, whom I interviewed at this society on October 30, 2020. Sakon comes from the same Lin clan of Pavit, the current DBSS president mentioned above.

Compassion Hall of this society.⁵³ The CBRST also includes Guanyin, but only as a supplementary deity for Gautama Buddha, Amitābha Buddha, and the Medicine Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru) worshiped in the Great Strength Hall. Guanyin known as Chao Mae Kuan-im in Thailand, has long been worshiped by both Chinese and Thais for the support of various worldly interests, with statues of her in various styles and positions installed in many Thai Theravada temples, reflecting her growing popularity in recent decades.⁵⁴ Needless to say, by installing a Guanyin statue with grand historical allusions, the DBSS had caught up with trends in the religious market. Even today, the recitation of the Universal Gate Chapter (Pumen pin 普門品) and the Grand Compassion Repentance (Dabei chan 大悲懺), two rituals specifically linked to Guanyin, are popular among the society's members and held regularly.



Fig. 9: The Thousand-hand Guanyin statue in the Grand Compassion Hall located on the first floor of DBSS Main Hall.

⁵³ In my conversation with him on October 30, 2020, Sakon proudly stated that the Guanyin statue in their society has a more than five-hundred-year history and unparalleled magic efficacy.

⁵⁴ Luo, "Bodhisattva, Merit, and Identity," 56-57.

Also, under the leadership of Derun, by the early 1950s the DBSS had reached the apex of its trans-regional communications and exchanges with Buddhist individuals and institutions across the broader Southeast Asian region. The most influential development was DBSS's import of Taixu's bone relics from the Hong Kong Buddhist community in 1954, on its twentieth anniversary. Taixu's feet had never touched the soil of Thailand during his travels from Chongqing through Southeast Asian countries in 1939.⁵⁵ It is said that this monk was cautiously aware of the growing anti-Chinese sentiment in Thailand at that time and so gave up any intention to visit, despite receiving an invitation to do so from the local Chinese Buddhists.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Taixu was highly venerated by Chinese Buddhists in Thailand, particularly those affiliated with the DDBS who regarded this monk reformist as a spiritual guide, and who often communicated with him by letters for advice.

⁵⁵ Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 133-134.

⁵⁶ Shi, *Taixu Dashi nian pu*, 103.

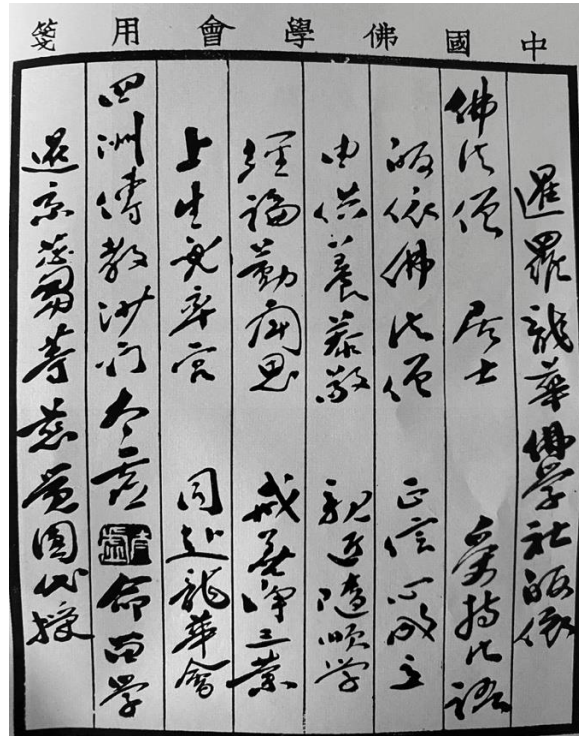


Fig. 10: One of the inspirational letters handwritten by Taixu to the DBSS in 1938, which has been preserved by this society (retrieved from the DBSS archive).⁵⁷

To honour Taixu, their spiritual guide, who had passed away in 1947, the DBSS built a memorial hall named after him in 1951.⁵⁸ On February 28, 1954, after learning that some of his bone relics had been carried out of China to Hong Kong by his close disciple Youtan 優曇(1908-1993) in 1949, the DBSS dispatched its then financial director, Chen Maolian 陳茂

⁵⁷ At the end of this letter, Taixu stated that he ordered Dengci, one of his students who was studying Pali and Theravada doctrine, to bestow his inspiration on DBSS on his behalf. As early as 1935, four talented monks were sent by the Taixu-led Chinese Buddhist Association to Thailand, where they were hosted by the then Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, Prince Bhujong Jombund, to study Theravada doctrine in a royal temple. See also Fafang, "Review of Chinese Buddhist Circle during 1936," 222.

⁵⁸ *Taixu dashi sheli anta jinian kan*, 30.

廉 (1903-1971), to the British colony, requesting the former to grant permission to install and worship the relics in Thailand. Youtan, who paid a stop-over visit to the DBSS in 1948, during a trip to Singapore and Penang, organized an elaborate ceremony, inviting Hairen 海仁 (1886-1978) and several other established local monks to hand over the relics to Maolian on behalf of the Hong Kong Buddhist community. More than a thousand local Buddhists from all walks of life participated in this event.⁵⁹ Back in Thailand a Thai-styled stupa with a royal umbrella on its pinnacle was built to contain the relics.



Fig. 10: The stupa accommodating Taixu's relics at the DBSS headquarters (the photo was taken by the author on October 30, 2020).

⁵⁹ *Taixu dashi sheli anta jinian kan*, 15.

On April 17, 1954, a large ceremony was organized at the DBSS to consecrate the newly built stupa and install the relics inside the stupa. The then Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha, was invited to preside over the consecration while Chuk Mor 竺摩 (1913-2002), another close follower of the late Taixu, led the installation. Chuk Mor later settled down in Penang where he followed Taixu's footsteps by dedicating himself to organizing the Malaysian Buddhist Association and promoting modern monastic education.⁶⁰

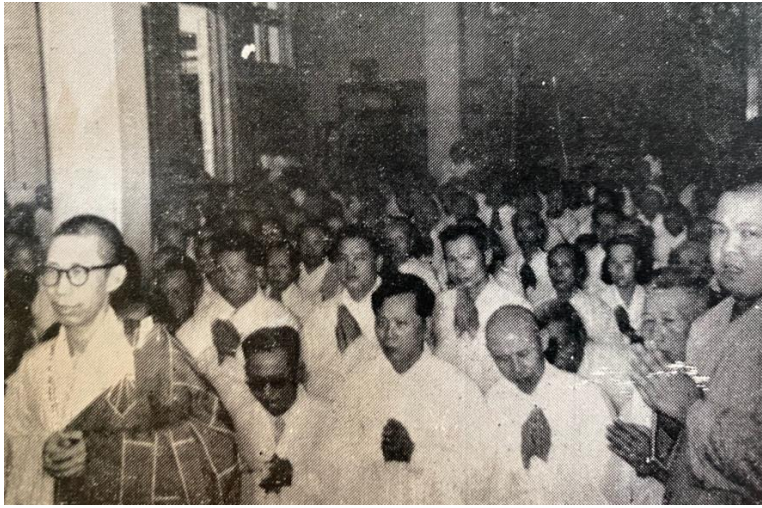


Fig.11: Chuk Mor in full ceremonial robes leading the relic-installation ritual held at the DBSS main hall on 17 April 1954 (retrieved from the DBSS archives).

Besides its significant communications with Taixu and his associates who had fled China after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took over the mainland in 1949, the DBSS also had connections with the Sev-

⁶⁰ Ha, "The Influence and Inspiration of Master Tai Xu, 29-61.

enth Changkya Hutukhtu, Taixu's contemporary. As a prominent Buddhist monk of the Tibetan tradition, himself of Mongolian origin, the Seventh Changkya Hutukhtu had loyally served the Kuomintang to strengthen its rule over Inner Mongolia, as well as Tibet. Sponsored by the political and Buddhist elites from the Kuomintang government, the Changkya Hutukhtu spent most of his time in mainland China and received the self-exiled Ninth Panchen Lama in China's then capital Nanjing.⁶¹ The DDBS's spiritual connection with the Changkya Hutukhtu was notably expressed by the six-syllabled mantra *Aum maṇi padme hūṃ*, which was handwritten by him for the society in both Tibetan and Mongolian characters, as seen in Fig. 12 below. Besides the DDBS, the sixth JN patriarch Pujing 普淨 (1902-1986) also maintained a close connection with this revered Mongolian lama, from whom he claimed to have received some esoteric teachings.⁶²



⁶¹ Jagou, *The Ninth Panchen Lama (1883-1937)*, 106, 180.

⁶² Liu, "Jin Nikaya," 68.

Fig.12: The Six-syllabled Mantra handwritten by the Seventh Changkya Hotukhtu in a wooden frame hung at the rear of the entrance to the DBSS (the photo was taken by the author on November 1, 2020)

In summary, like the CBRST, the DBSS initially aimed to promote Mahāyāna doctrinal studies among the Chinese Buddhists of Thailand though, in its early years, seminars dedicated to this end were held only occasionally. Nevertheless, its emphasis on the popular practice of worshipping Guanyin had brought a large number of followers from the local Chinese community by the 1950s. The communications that the DDBS had established with Taixu and his associates, especially those who had fled the mainland to Hong Kong and other parts of this region after the CCP takeover in 1949, contributed to a trans-regional network of Chinese Buddhism within and outside China. Further, the DBSS's connection with the Changkya Hotukhtu gained it transnational religious networks, much like the CBRST's close relations with Sinhalese Buddhists.

Discussion

As seen from this study, the Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Thailand were registered in the early 1930s and reached their zenith of popularity in the 1950s and 1960s through their well-organized doctrinal seminars, ritual observation, and other meritorious activities. They commonly followed Mahāyāna ideology and practice despite their incorporation of Theravada-oriented architectural elements into their building construction, mainly taking place in the 1950s after Thailand joined the American-led anti-Communist coalition. It could be dangerous to install Chinese-styled buildings at that time when the ethnic Chinese were suppressed and demoralized by Thai government rhetoric labeling them as spies for

Communist China.⁶³ It could also be argued that the Chinese lay Buddhists tended to bond together through their affiliated societies for spiritual relief given that the local socio-political environment became unfriendly for the Chinese as a whole at that time. If so, this might be one of the core reasons that the Chinese lay Buddhist societies had recruited the largest number of members in that period of their nearly one-hundred-year history.

Interestingly, the boom in lay Buddhist societies commonly happened both in China and Thailand during the 1930s. At that time in China, Buddhism saw a surge of popularity among Chinese literati and the bourgeoisie, who organized and led various religious societies seeking spiritual and philosophical solutions to the then socio-political chaos occurring after the fall of Manchurian sovereignty.⁶⁴ Some of these concerned Chinese literati fled China to Southeast Asia for better opportunities. They constituted the early leadership of the local lay Buddhist societies after settling down and becoming financially comfortable enough in their host countries. As we have seen in the case of both CBRST and DBSS, their founders, Du Shaoting and Deng Yucheng respectively, may well have been two of these Chinese literati who were faithful Mahāyāna followers and well-educated before emigrating to Thailand and then propagated the Mahāyāna doctrine in this Theravada-dominated land.

The Siamese Revolution of 1932 brought about a more liberal and democratic environment in Thailand, including for its large Buddhist clergy. Inspired by the new concept of democracy, about two thousand Buddhist monks from twelve provinces reportedly petitioned the government to reform the royal-sanctioned Thai Sangha in 1933.⁶⁵ Perhaps, the

⁶³ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 143-44.

⁶⁴ Hodous, *Buddhism and Buddhists in China*, 1030-1049.

⁶⁵ Baker and Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, 123.

Chinese lay Buddhists in Thailand also sensed the change of political atmosphere at that time, and henceforth started self-organizing their own societies paralleling either the local Theravada orthodoxy or the institutionalized JN. They managed the societies by themselves to serve their own religious needs. Chinese monks, even famous monks like Taixu, and others deceased or alive, venerated as spiritual guides, were somewhat instrumentalized to glorify their religious authenticity and authority.

To host religious gatherings and consolidate communal bonds, both the CBRST and DBSS spent roughly a decade building their respective infrastructures from the time of their official registration in the early 1930s. Achieving this required generous donations, especially from wealthy members. As found in this study, generations of leaders from both CBRST and DBSS were often the major donors. Their own financial success, and their generosity, supplemented their legitimacy in occupying leadership positions within the societies, as exemplified by the Chen family in the case of CBRST and the Lin family in the DBSS. Given the convention that those who financially contributed the most were those who led, the selection of society leaders was thus limited to a small circle of major donors. Fewer opportunities remained for the societies to have competent leaders genuinely willing and capable of taking an innovative approach to established programs, or to create something more appealing to the local religious market. The incompetence of the leaders in both CBRST and DDSS after the 1960s onward, caused the rapidly shrinking membership of these two societies, despite their praiseworthy dedication to society affairs.

Another main reason explaining the declining membership of the Chinese lay Buddhist societies since the 1970s could be the virtual loss of Chinese language among the Chinese communities by that time. After decades-long policies imposed by the Thai government suppressing local Chi-

nese schools since the late 1930s, the Chinese in Thailand had been forcibly assimilated to the Thai educational system; they eventually lost their Chinese language and dialects. Given that the teachings and practices the Chinese lay Buddhist societies have promoted and carried out in Thailand are all written and described in Chinese, the loss of Chinese language among the local Chinese communities by the 1960s caused tremendous difficulties in sustaining their original aspiration of spreading Mahāyāna Buddhism in their host country. Even when the popularity of the Chinese language revived in Thailand in the early 1990s,⁶⁶ these societies failed to attract the return of Chinese Buddhists despite their varied efforts. Their members, especially the younger generations, have either chosen what they perceive to be the more interesting religious services offered by the Taiwanese missionaries or have turned to the “prosperity religions” popularized by other local religious actors. Some of them have been simply absorbed into mainstream Theravada devotional practice.

The findings of this study suggest that the Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Thailand built up multiple trans-regional religious networks with Buddhist individuals and institutions across Southeast Asia. For instance, the CBRST maintained a close relationship with the WFB, the first World Buddhist Organization and the DBSS had a productive interaction with the Buddhist community of Hong Kong. Such relations necessarily took place outside of the People’s Republic of China from the early 1950s on, due to the CCP takeover in 1949, after which China was subject to self-isolation until the late 1970s. If there were connections between these Chinese lay Buddhist societies and China, they remained only until the early 1950s and were limited to the spiritual level as exemplified by the DDSS’s veneration of Taixu who had never visited Thailand. Even after China reopened to foreign investment in the late 1970s and Buddhism was in-

⁶⁶ Manomaiviboon, “Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand,” 15-16.

cluded as one of the tools to demonstrate its soft power abroad, particularly in the Buddhist mainland of Southeast Asia,⁶⁷ the minor influence of the Chinese lay Buddhist societies in Thailand attracted no attention from this Communist-ruled giant. The Beijing-sponsored Buddhist envoys were often seen approaching the powerful Thai Sangha for communication and exchange, rather than the local Buddhist organizations of Chinese origin. On the other hand, the Chinese, especially the local-born generations who were educated either in Thailand or the West, and to a certain extent witnessed the Thai government's fearsome anti-communist campaigns in the 1950s through the 1970s, are still very cautious concerning possible negative consequences associated with connections to CCP-ruled China. The current leaders of the Chinese lay Buddhist societies are in their late seventies or early eighties and, by and large, experienced the Thai government's unfriendly Chinese policies in the name of anti-communism from the 1950s through the 1970s. This appears to provide good reason for their current lack of interest in a rapprochement with China for religious guidance and exchange.

Conclusion

Both the Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand and Dragon-flower Buddhist Society of Siam are of interest for their persistent upkeep of Mahāyāna ideology and their determination to avoid blending their practices with those of the more popular religious pathways, which seem more appealing to the younger generation of Chinese. Their continuity mainly depends on the generosity of their leaders and ordinary society members whose number is decreasing year by year. They currently grapple with insufficient donations to sustain their operations. A key finding

⁶⁷ Raymond, "Religion as a Toll of Influence," 352.

of this study is that in the future, the membership, and thus viability of these two societies, will continue to decline.

By contrast, the Lotus-flower Buddhist society, mentioned at the beginning of this article, has recently experienced increasing membership, especially after the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic has attracted those interested in their perceived Daoist connections to a legacy of spiritual and medical knowledge.⁶⁸ A remaining question worthy of future study, is the extent to which other Chinese lay Buddhist societies, inclined to such popular syncretic practices, have also reinvigorated their popularity during this stressful COVID-19 era.

List of Abbreviations

CBRST Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand

CCP Chinese Communist Party

DBSS Dragon-flower Buddhist Society of Siam

LFBS Lotus-flower Buddhist Society

⁶⁸ In my last phone conversation with her on December 23, 2020, Ms. Suvimol Mahagisiri informed me that the LFBS received a growing number of visitors seeking spiritual consultation to prevent the Covid-19 virus since March 2020. To feed this increasing demand, Suvimol said that her society had organized specific ceremonies where the spiritual medium of Chinese God-King of Medicine and Agricultural Shennong were invited to offer consultation.

JN Jin Nikaya

Bibliography

Buddhisaro, Raphin, and Phichet Thangto. "Annam Nikaya Buddhism on Vietnamese Style in Thailand: History of Development." *ASEAN Journal of Religious and Cultural Research* 1, no. 2 (2018): 1-16.

Chia, Jack Meng-Tat. *Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Dewaraja, Lorna. "Thailand's Sublime Gift to Sri Lanka: The Services Rendered by Upāli Mahā Thera and His Associates." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka* 48 (2003): 76-90.

Duara, Prasenjit. "Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900-1945." *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 4 (1997): 1030-1051.

Fafang, "Review of Chinese Buddhist Circle during 1936." In *Annual Report of the Japanese-Chinese Buddhist Research Society*, 2nd year, 219-250. Kyoto: The Japanese-Chinese Buddhist Research Society, 1937.

Hansen, Anne Ruth. "Modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia." In *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History*, edited by Norman G. Owen, 236-246. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Hodous, Lewis. *Buddhism and Buddhists in China*. New York: NuVision Publication, 1924.

Hoskin, John. *An Illustrated History of Thailand*. Bangkok: John Beaufoy Publishing, 2018.

Jagou, Fabienne. *Ninth Panchen Lama (1883-1937): A Life at the Crossroads of Sino-Tibetan Relations*. Translated by Rebecca Bissett Buechel. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2011.

Katoka, Tatsuki. "Religion as Non-Religion: The Place of Chinese Temples in Phuket, Southern Thailand." *Southeast Asia Studies* 1, no.3 (2012): 461-485.

Kitiarsa, Pattana. *Mediums, Monks, and Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today*. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books in association with University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2012.

_____. "Beyond the Weberian Trails: An Essay on the Anthropology of Southeast Asian Buddhism." *Religion Compass* 3, no.2 (2000): 200-224.

Liu, Yaoping. "The History of Jin Nikaya in Thailand: A Preliminary Study from a Socio-political Perspective." *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 33 (2020): 121-170.

_____. "Jin Nikaya: Development, Organization, Practices, and Socio-political Interactions in Thailand." PhD diss., Mahidol University of Thailand, 2017.

Luo, Yong. "Bodhisattva, Merit, and Identity: The Belief and Practice of Guanyin among Thai-Chinese." PhD diss., Assumption University of Thailand, 2016.

Manomaiviboon, Prapin. "Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand." *Manusya: Journal of Humanities* 7 (2004):12-24.

Ownby, David. "Introduction: Secret Societies Reconsidered." In "*Secret Societies*" *Reconsidered: Perspectives on the Social History of South China and Southeast Asia*,

edited by David Ownby and Mary Somers Herdhues, 3-33. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Pittman, Don A. *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

Pongsapich, Amara. "Chinese Settlers and their Role in Modern Thailand." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science* 23, no. 1 (1995): 13-28.

Raymond, Gregory V. "Religion as a Tool of Influence: Buddhism and China's Belt and Road Initiative in Mainland Southeast Asia." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 42, no. 3 (2020): 346-371.

Sng, Jeffery and Pimpraphai Bisalputra. *A History of the Thai-Chinese*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2015.

Swearer, Donald K. *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010.

Szczepanski, Beth. "Ghost Festival Rituals: Redeeming Hungry Ghosts, Preserving Musical Heritage." *Chime* 18, no.19 (2010): 37-65.

Wyatt, David K. *Thailand: A Short History*. 2nd ed. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2003.

Wang, Gungwu. *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to Quest for Autonomy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Welch, Holmes. *The Buddhist Revival in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Chinese Sources

Ching Hsin 淨心. *Haiwai fojiao fangwen ji* 海外佛教訪問記 (Records on overseas Buddhist visits). Kaohsiung: The Protecting Committee of Pure Awakening Buddhist Career, 2008.

Ha, Mui-nyuk 夏美玉. "Taixu dashi dui Zhumo fashi zhi yingxiang yu qifa 太虛大師對竺摩法師之影響與啟發 (The influence and inspiration of Master Tai Xu on Venerable Zhu Mo)." *New Era College Academic Journal* 3 (July 2006): 29-61.

Shi, Yinshun 釋印順. *Taixu dashi nianpu* 太虛大師年譜 (The chronology of Grand Master Taixu). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011.

Taiguo huazong dazongchang pujing shangshi qishi shoudan tekan 泰國華僧大宗長普淨上師七十壽誕特刊 (Special volume on celebration of Jin Nikaya Patriarch Pujing's 70th birthday). Bangkok: Taiguo Huazong, 1971.

Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 21 zhounian: xinshi luocheng jinian kan 泰國中華佛教研究社成立 21 週年:新址落成紀念刊 (Commemorative magazine on the 21st Anniversary of Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand and Inauguration of New Office). Bangkok: Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she, 1951.

Taiguo zhonghua fojiao yanjiu she chengli 11 zhounian jinian kan 泰國中華佛教研究社成立 11 週年紀念刊 (Commemorative Magazine on the 11th Anniversary of the Foundation of Chinese Buddhist Research Society of Thailand). Bangkok: Taiguo zhonghua foxue yanjiu she, 1941.

Taixu dashi sheli anta jinian kan 太虛大師舍利安塔紀念刊 (Commemorative magazine on the installation of Master Taixue's relics stupa). Bangkok: Xiaoluo longhua fojiao she, 1954.

Web Sources

The World Buddhist Fellowship. "History." <http://wfbhq.org/about-history.php>. Accessed October 1, 2020.

Notes on the Contributor

Yaoping Liu received his Ph.D. in religious studies from Mahidol University, where he served as a lecturer of Buddhist studies from 2017 to 2021. He is currently the Vice Dean of International College at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, on General Affairs and Cooperative Education. Dr. Liu has dedicated his scholarly attention toward the Chinese Buddhist Communities in Thailand for years, contributed a profound study of the Jin Nikaya, one of the two Mahāyāna-oriented schools under the Thai Sangha.

Correspondence to: Yaoping Liu.

Email: yaoping.l@mail.rmutk.ac.th