

Thai Monks' Adaptability in Indonesian Chinese Community

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Abstract

This paper answers how Thai Buddhism adopted by Thai Dhammayutta missionaries (TDM) can respond to the need of Indonesian Chinese. Ethnographic methodology was conducted in Java for five months to observe various rituals as well as to interview many Indonesian informants. It found that Thai missionary monks in Indonesia successfully adapted religious rituals and worldly strategies to attract the Chinese patrons. Four main strategies were examples for this claim namely, (1) The simplicity and low price of Thai ritual, (2) Weekend houses in Thai temples, (3) Magazine for advertising the Chinese patrons' products, and (4) Social welfare linking the Chinese and the Javanese. Simply put, this case study obviously shows the potential of Thai monks who can also survive in the new land though they are not surrounded by Thai communities as found in Europe and America. In addition, not only rituals are arranged to serve the Chinese's need, but the teaching in the form of translated books are also distributed.

Keywords: *Indonesian Chinese, Dhammayutta missionary, ritual, social welfare*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is known as a multi-cultural country, where six religions such as Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, have been officially recognized in the constitution. According to the percentages of religious population in Indonesia provided by Plattdasch, Muslims are 86%, Protestants are 6%, Catholics are 3.5%, Hindu are 1.8%, Buddhists are 1%, and around 0.6% whose religious beliefs are not clearly identified but consist of

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indigenous, syncretic and animist beliefs or *Kebatinan* (Platzdasch, 2014, p. 4). In this respect, Buddhism, especially Theravada, is also allowed to run its missionary work in Indonesia, though Chinese religions and Mahayana school were not needed in some periods due to the political reason (Suryadinata, 2005, p. 81).

Thai Dhammayutta missionaries (TDMs) have been officially sent to many countries to propagate Theravada Buddhism since 1969. All TDM are initiated, trained and patronized by The Institute of Dhammaduta Bhikkhu Going Abroad (TIDGA), which was founded in 1966 at Wat Bowornives Vihara, Bangkok, under the support of the Thai government through the Department of Religious Affairs. TIDGA has moved to Wat Phrasri Mahathat Bangkok in 2016. The first group of TDM sent to Indonesia in 1969 consisted of four monks, with Bhante Win¹ or Phramaha Win Vijjano as the leader. Nevertheless, this first mission was not initiated without native patrons, as they were invited and supported by Ven. Ashin Jinarakkhita, the leader of Indonesian Buddhists at that time. In 2014, 19 TDM and 37 TDM's assistants were working in Indonesia. A total of 22 temples have been built in several regions. Buddha Metta Arama in Central Jakarta and Vipassana Graha in Bandung are main temples function as TDM administrative centers.

Having discussed about Thai missionary around the world today, on the American continent, TDM consists of 58 temples and 6 temples in Canada. In Europe, there are 5 temples in France, 4 in Norway, 1 in Finland, 3 in England, 12 in Germany, 8 in Sweden, 1 in Denmark and 1 in Italy. There have been 15 temples established in Australia and 4 in New Zealand. In Asia, there are 22 temples in Indonesia, 1 in Malaysia, 4 in China, 1 in Japan, 5 in India and 1 in South Korea (TIDGA, 2014, pp. 214-240). However, all cases, except Indonesia, can establish and survive under the Thai patrons' supports (Phrakru Naranath Jetiyabhirak et al., 2019; Khiewon, 2018; Varamedhi, 2015; Petphikul Na Nakhon, 2012; Pattana Kitiasa, 2010; and Seager, 1999). Surrounding by Thai Buddhist migrants, monks whose lifestyle typically depended on laypeople's assistance, must behave to serve the Thais. It means that Thai monasteries overseas are eventually used as spaces to preserve the Thai culture and identity. Monks always arrange Thai festivals as found in Thailand and provide the opportunities for Thai devotees to make merits in several occasions rather than persuading the locals to Buddhism.

¹Bhante is a Pali word which is generally used by Indonesian Buddhists to call Theravada monks regardless of their origin countries. It can be translated as "Venerable." This research project also uses this term in the same way as used by my informants.

This paper proposes that the case of Thai Dhammayutta monks in Indonesia is exceptional on the ground that they can adapt rituals and teaching to attract the new patrons and live without the Thai community's support. Therefore, this paper investigates strategies that have been initiated by Thai Dhammayutta missionaries (TDM) in Indonesia by focusing on how TDM members negotiate with the non-Theravada devotees. Ethnographic methodologies; participant-observation and in-depth interview, were conducted in Java for five months in 2015 and 2016. The researcher, as a monk, stayed with Thai missionary monks and participated their daily activities, and interviewed many Indonesian laypeople who joined those rituals.

This paper is organized into main three parts. (1) *Introduction*: provides backgrounds and justification of this research project, research question as well as methodologies. (2) *Adaptation in Indonesian Chinese community*: describes strategies adopted by Thai monks to attract the Chinese patrons. Various issues namely; Temples and books by Thai monks, The simplicity and low price of Thai rituals, Weekend houses in Thai temples, Magazine for advertising the Chinese patrons' products, and Social welfare linking the Chinese and the Javanese. (3) conclusion; all arguments will be briefly restated.

2. Adaptation in Indonesian Chinese Community

This part demonstrates some cases of adaptability as well as tolerances of TDM members in order to attract the new supporters. However, it should be mentioned that most Indonesian Chinese do not convert from Chinese or Mahayana traditions to Thai Theravada, instead, they accept and adapt some beliefs, while their old beliefs are allowed to be observed. It is a combination of beliefs and practices. Regarding to the population, 0.72% or around 1,703,254 of Indonesians identify themselves as Buddhists (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). Additionally, in November 2016, the total numbers of monks in Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana (from all parts of Indonesia) are about 300. TDM members from Thailand have been also increasing from 4 in 1969 to 60 in 2016. Undoubtedly, most Buddhist patrons who play a vital role in supporting Thai Buddhism as well as other traditions are Indonesian Chinese. While Javanese Buddhists, mostly in central Java, have less relationships with Thai monks but another native group, Sangha Theravada Indonesia (STI). However, they also received some supports from the TDM members with cooperation of the Chinese. This issue will be discussed in the section of Social welfares liking relations between the Chinese and the Javanese.

2.1 Temples and books by Thai monks

Thai missionary work in Indonesia can be classified into two periods. There are two ways to categorize the periods of Thai missionary in Indonesia. First, it can be looked at their awareness or purposes of going to Indonesia. While the first group of TDM led by Bhante Win, who went there as assistants of Jinarakkhita, to propagate Theravada Buddhism, Bhante Wongsin and other Thai monks in later period view their mission as their own duty and initiation. That is because they have their own organization, in practice. This kind of awareness occurs after about three decades when Thai missionary strongly grows. Therefore, Win and his friends helped Indonesians to establish Theravada in their own tradition, in contrast, TDM members in later period build temples for Thai monks or even though for Indonesian monks but must be under the control of Thai monks. Second, it can be divided according to the TDM's leaders' backgrounds. Win was from the town-dwelling tradition (1969-2006), and Wongsin from the forest tradition (2006-present). Their different origins in terms of monastic traditions undeniably determine their policy and strategies to work in Indonesia. The book translation project is an example for this claim.

In terms of building monasteries, Win established only a temple for TDM members, Vihara Buddhametta Arama in central Jakarta, and other two temples; i.e. Vihara Jakarta Dhammacakka Jaya in Jakarta and Vihara Buddhasasanavamsa in Magelang for Indonesian monks who ordained mostly at Wat Bowornnives Vihara under his assistance. He did actually not like to build temples; but preferred to give sermons instead. His autobiography mentions that he always stayed in the Chinese shrines (Klentang) for the purpose of guiding people in the Five and Eight Precepts as well as in Buddhist meditation. These duties led him from Klenteng to Klenteng. Therefore, the big temple was needless, while the missionary work led by Wongsin and Kamsai can raise more than 20 temples throughout Indonesia. According to my interviews with Wongsin and Kamsai in 2015, Win often sent the new TDM members to rural areas on the ground that they can learn Bahasa Indonesia very fast. That is because they will be surrounded by Indonesians and they will have chance to give a sermon. On the contrary, Kamsai and Wongsin allow many monks to stay together in the big temples. Therefore, the newcomers are not expected to speak Bahasa Indonesia, because the senior monks help them to communicate with devotees. However, they are interested in religious propagation, because rituals performed as a group of TDM members can attract those devotees as well.

Besides the constructions of monasteries, Thai Dhamma books that have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia in these two periods also show the different themes. While the first period emphasized in academic and scholarly Buddhism, the second period emphasizes in meditation and other general issues. This difference is assumedly caused by two factors. (1) The different backgrounds of TDM members. Win graduated Pali Studies Grade VII and B.A. in Religious Studies (Mahamakut Buddhist University, Bangkok), while Wongsin is from the traditional forest monastery. (2) The different periods of propagation. The early period of TDM led by Win must deal with the task to guide newly ordained monks and lay people to the right way of Theravada tradition. He must therefore be responsible for supporting the translation of academic books. When that task was done, the second period can promote other general issues especially the traditional forest practices that many of Thai monks are familiar with. In later period, though some books of the Thai Sangharaja have been translated, their essence is not purely academic but about how to practice meditation.

Thai books translated into Bahasa Indonesia in the first period (1980-1994) are listed as follows. (1) Navakovada (Dhamma and Disciplines) by H.R.H. the Late Supreme Patriarch Prince Vajiryanavarorasa, in 1980, (2) Kitab Suci Dhammapada (The Holy Texts of Dhammapada), in 1982, (3) Paritta Suci: Chanting Pagi dan Sore (Mantras for Protection and Holiness: Morning and Evening Chanting) in 1983, (4) Abhidhamma: Sabda murui Sang Buddha? (Abhidhamma: Is The Buddha's Teaching?) by Jan Sanjivapaputta, in 1988, (5) Sabda Sabda Sang Buddha Untuk Dhamma Class I (The Buddha's Verses for Dhamma Class I) in 1988, (6) Dhamma Vibhaga Penggolongan Dhamma II (Classification of Dhamma Vol. II) in 1991, and (7) Gihi Patipati: Praktik Buddha Dhamma Bagi Umat Awam (Guidance for the Householders) in 1994. These last three books were written by H.R.H. the Late Supreme Patriarch Prince Vajiryanavarorasa.

In the second period (1991-2015), Thai books translated into Bahasa Indonesia consisted of (1) Magga Vidhi Cara Menempuh Sang Jalan (The Right Way to Enlightenment) by Ajahn Thet Desarangi, in 1991, (2) Hidup Sesuai Dhamma (Livelihood according to Dhamma) by Ajahn Chah, in 1994, (3) Kediaman Kita yang Sejati (Our Real Home) by Ajahn Chah, in 1997, (4) Penjara Kehidupan (The Prison of Life) by Buddhadasa, in 2003, (5) Panna Mengembangkan Samadhi (Wisdom Develops Concentration) by Ajahn Maha Bua Nyanasampanno, in 2001, (6) Tidak ada Ajahn Chah (No Ajahn Chah), in 2004, (7) Arahatta Magga Arahatta Phala , Jalan

Menuju Pencapaian Arahatah (The Path to Arahantahood) by Ajahn Maha Boowa Nanassambanno, in 2005, (8) A Spiritual Biography of Venerable Ajahn Mun Bhurittatta Thera by Ven. Maha Boowa Nyanassambanno, in 2009, (9) Kehidupan Sekarang Sangat Penting (The Present Is the Most Important) by Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, in 2009, and so forth (Buaban, 2017).²

Of course, all publications have been supported by Indonesian Chinese who are the networks of each translator or temple. Those books undeniably help to create the new (imagined) community of Theravada Buddhism in Indonesia. The different themes of translated books have been chosen by TDM members in each period, signifying the different backgrounds of Thai monks and strategies to attract new believers. This means that in the later period, until now, the traditional forest meditation seems to be impressed by Indonesian Chinese. Book publication is financially supported by the Chinese, however, they are provided for free distribution, in which the new members can consume. Ibu Suharti (pseudonym) revealed that two new members came to Vihara because of those book that she gave as a gift. However, religious rituals are also equally important in different purposes that will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 The Simplicity and low price of Thai rituals

The simplicity and low price of these rituals are also main reasons that make the Chinese Buddhists participate TDM's activities. Of course, I am not claiming that some Indonesian Chinese prefer rituals in Theravada tradition instead of Mahayana or Chinese customs because of the low price of ritual performance. It is just one of many reasons that I found by considering an economic aspect, meanwhile some interviewees also clearly reveal such factor.

Rituals relevant to the dead are good examples. In May 2016, TDM members (I was included as a participant-observer) were invited to Rumah Duka Jelambar, which is the place for performing the cremation ritual in Jakarta. It belongs to Jabar Agung foundation (Yayasan) and is rent by the Chinese, Buddhist, and Christian family members to arrange rituals according to their beliefs. By observing the next room, traditional Chinese ritual was performed by a Taoist priest lasting more than one hour, whereas all family members, in the black cloths, must closely participate. Chanting in Chinese, walking around the coffin, and burning papers were accordingly conducted. I was told by Ibu Linda (pseudonym), who is a friend of the dead's daughter, that each room costs at least

²The list of all translated books can also be traced at <https://bit.ly/31ugpDW>, accessed on August 27, 2020.

375 USD or 5,000,000 IDR per night. The Chinese always perform this ritual about 3-5 days. In addition, the cremation costs about 750 USD or 10,000,000 IDR. This price is not included the room-cleaner, flower declaration, traditional Chinese materials for ceremony and food for guests. Moreover, traditional Chinese priest costs about 450 USD or 6,000,000 IDR for all rituals.

In contrast, TDM members perform a ritual that took thirty minutes approximately. It starts with a short chanting of Parita Suci Avamangala and follows by a twenty-minute Dhamma Talk. The ritual is finalized with transferring merit to the dead (*pelimpahan jasa*). Chanting books and speaker were brought by the temple's lay devotees. Various Chinese traditional materials are not needed. At that time, 7.50 USD or 100,000 IDR was offered to each monk. Of course, the price for TDM is not fixed, it depends on devotees. It means that in some rituals, each TDM receives 37 USD or 500,000 IDR, some rituals only 3.75 USD or 50,000 IDR, while in some cases, they receive nothing. In fact, it seems that TDM members perform rituals in order to attract new followers and maintain the old patrons. This phenomenon, according to my field-observation in Medan in 2016, can also be seen in Theravada monks in Sangha Agung Indonesia or SAGIN order, who always perform rituals for the Chinese nearby their temples without gaining any money though those people rarely attend the temple's activities on the ground that they prefer Chinese traditions than Theravada.

In addition, annual memorial ceremonies of the dead as well as other ancestors can also be arranged in Thai temples in the simplified way. This ritual happens almost every day in Buddhometta Arama, one of main TDM's temples in central Jakarta. Four packages of materials and money, in general about 7.50 USD or 100,000 IDR, are offered to four monks who perform a ritual. This ritual is formally called *Pattidana* or *Pelimpahan Jasa* in Bahasa Indonesia. In deeds, it is also popular in Mahayana tradition, called *Upacara Ullambana* (*Chau Tu*: Chinese).³ However, as reported by Linda (pseudonym) in June 18, 2016, the Mahayana way of performing this ritual requires more materials, time, and money, whereas Dhamma Talk is not emphasized. I was convinced that not only the low-price ritual provided by TDM members, but Dhamma Talk is also

³The ritual of *Pelimpahan Jasa* or *Upacara Ullambana* (*Chau Tu*) is popular in Mahayana. The huge ritual is annually arranged at Taman Alam Lumbini, Medan, which is chaired by Bhikshu and Bhikshuni from Mahayana tradition. It is believed that ancestors, after receive merit from this ritual, will have better lives (Majalah Lumbini, 2016, p. 4).

another factor to attract the middle-class Chinese who carry high education as well as those who identify themselves as modern (rational) Buddhists.

In addition, some rich Chinese also have the different reasons to support Thai monks. The next section discusses two reasons that Thai temples can respond to the Chinese's needs, namely, Weekend house in Thai temple and TDM's magazine for advertising the Chinese's products. It cannot be said that these kinds of people do not believe in Theravada Buddhism merely by observing their behaviors that will be examined below. However, it cannot also be denied that their contributions produce a lot of benefits in supporting TDM's mission.

2.3 Weekend house in Thai temple

A fascinating method for developing networks that was adopted by TDM in the early period can be illustrated by the case of "Gedung Metta." This is a big building in Vipassana Graha, Lembang, Bandung. Gedung Metta's building consists of three floors, and a total of 51 rooms, with the kitchen and toilet inside. Bhante Chaluai Sujivo, the first abbot, set out to build it as a residence of meditators. Unfortunately, the funds were not enough due to the lack of devotees at that time. He therefore decided to invite many Chinese business families to build their own room by donating some money to the temple. It is known well that Lembang is a city for tourism, with a cool temperature (about 25 Degree Celsius in the day and 18 Degree Celsius at night). It also generally used by the high and middle class as a leisure place on the weekend. The conditions proposed by Chaluai was that those who donated enough money for one room would be the owner forever by holding its key and would be able to go to rest whenever they wanted. However, another key was held by the temple, so that the room could be provided for the meditators if it was not being used by the owners at that particular time. Strictly speaking, many of the room owners intended to donate not for religious purposes only but also for their own leisure on holiday. This case can interestingly be regarded as the TDM's strategy to link with various networks that can ultimately help to drive their mission.

2.4 Magazine for advertising the Chinese patrons' products

Notably, the Buddhist magazines can help to advertise Chinese patrons' products. There are various Buddhist magazines published in Indonesia for example Berita Vimala Dharma (by Vihara Vimala Dharma, Bandung), Dawai (Vihara Dhammadipa, Surabaya), Dhammaprabha (Sangha

Agung Indonesia, Yogyakarta), Eka-Citta (Kamadis UGM, Yogyakarta), Kalyani (Yayasan Kusayayani, Bandung), Mitta (a Buddhist magazine for children, Yayasan Kusalayani, Bandung), Sinar Padumuttara (Vihara Padumuttara, Tangerang), etc. Those magazines generally belong to the temple organizations.

TDM under the organization of Yayasan Bandung Sucinno Indonesia (which belongs to the Vipassana Graha temple) also publishes its own monthly magazine named “Vipassana: Wadah Komunikasi Antra Umat Buddha” (Vipassana: Maintenance of Communication among Buddhists). Most of the above-mentioned magazines are distributed for free with the support of the Chinese. However, many pages are also dedicated to advertising different types of patrons’ products. Thus, Buddhist temples and magazines in Indonesia including Vipassana magazine can be used as the centers for enhancing business activities as well as finding the new clients of the Chinese patrons.

Another factor that encourages the rich Chinese to support TDM is the desire to intensify their dignity and social status. As had being noted, most of the Chinese who support Thai temples are from the middle and upper-middle classes. The assumption that all Chinese want to maintain their ethnic and religious identities as much as possible must nevertheless be questioned by this stage. In Indonesia, there are many Mahayana and Buddhayana (the mixed version of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana called SAGIN) temples which fully serve the Chinese identity. Nevertheless, many Chinese still prefer to participate in TDM temples, which emphasize in Theravada tradition. It therefore implies that the decision to choose the temple is not solely based on the ethnic identity maintenance but an economic aspect as well as intensification of human’s dignity.

According to my field-observation in 2015-2016, Mahayana Buddhist temples in Indonesia belong to the Chinese, who participate for religious reasons as well as economic connections. Mandarin or Hokkian are priority languages communicated among the Chinese in Mahayana temples. Commonly, the successful business man who donates a lot of money to a Mahayana temple will be appreciated in the public sphere. This act makes him prouder and more famous, and makes it easier to find more business networks. Thus, to become the main donor in a Mahayana temple is quite competitive, because there are many rich people.

This encourages many upper-middle class Chinese to find new groups of business network and consumers in other areas, Thai temples for example. Thai temples are broadly recognized as less Chinese in character since they combine Chinese, Thai and Javanese building styles. Moreover, their ceremonies are mostly conducted in Pali chanting with Bahasa Indonesia translation. On the other hand, some ceremonies, such as the Chinese New Year (Imlek) and Siripāda (worshipping the Buddha's footprint) were invented to serve this new group of patrons. According to the interview with Jirasak, a Thai missionary monk in South Korea, in May 2015, the Chinese have more capacity to determine the forms of activities if there are almost no Thai followers who would otherwise try to control everything in the Thai temples, just as they do in Thailand and other countries. As a result, important donors are sitting in the first row of seats in the ceremony and their names are also advertised as main patrons. Moreover, these people donate their products to the temple when the activity of social services is going to take place in some poor villages. Distribution of materials, which were donated by various Chinese companies, to a Muslim community in Purwakarta, June 6, 2015, is an example.

Notably, the background of Indonesia Buddhists who provide TDM supports is Chinese or Mahayana. They still participate in social activities arranged by Tzu Chi (Taiwanese Buddhist association) and other Mahayana temples. Thai temples in this stage can be seen as one of many places that those businesspersons use to seek their new business networks and evaluate their dignity as the main religious supporters. Of course, they may have faith in Theravada teaching as well.

2.5 Social welfare linking the Chinese and the Javanese

Generally, it is rare to find social welfare activities initiated by members of the Dhammayutta tradition in Thailand. That is probably because Dhammayutta monks in Bangkok are involved with studying the scriptures and serving the elites and the middle class rather than poor people, whereas monks in the forest tradition are encouraged to strive for self-enlightenment (Nirvana). In comparison, other Buddhist missionaries such as Anagarika Dhamapala from Sri Lanka and Master Taixu from China, adopted methods of Christian missionary in their social reforms and international propagation (Tanabe 2005 and Kemper 2005). Interestingly, Buddhist figures, such

as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Nikkyo Niwano, in the modern era, as observed by David Chappell (1999), have actively engaged in social activities and promoting inter-religious cooperation for world peace. Though, in practice, Dhammayutta monks must be surrounded by different groups of devotees, the adaptation of those monks is limited because they are always criticized by Thai laypeople on the ground that social welfare efforts are the duty of laypeople. However, those activities can be conducted by Thai monks outside the Thai Buddhist state. Bhante Wongsin, the second leader of TDM, is a good example in this case.

It has become obvious that TDM members try to play Mahayana's role in order to attract Mahayana Chinese. For example, twenty young people (15-25 years old) from poor families in Central Java were under Wongsin's patronage (Anak Usuh) in early 2015. Ten of them were staying in the Vipassana Graha temple, Bandung, while the other ten were residing at Dharma Widya School in Tangerang, close to Sukarno-Hatta International Airport. Those young people were being supported in everything: personal motorbike, daily expenses, education fees as well as money put monthly into saving accounts for their future. The young people's daily duties were to clean the temple, cook for the monks, and join in the evening chanting. A total of 29 of these young people had graduated with Bachelor's Degrees and now had their own jobs. At this point, the patronage would automatically end without any requirements for repayment or any other condition.

Dharma Widya, the secondary school located near the international airport in Jakarta is another example of TDM's social service. It has been managed by Dhammayutta missionaries since 2007. It previously was a private school that was going to be closed due to a failure in management, and then was bought by TDM, whose budget was from both Indonesian Chinese and Thai devotees. Dharma Widya has been one of the most successful TDM initiatives in Indonesia. In 2015, it had approximately 1,000 students. Most of them were Buddhists both from poor Chinese families and from local Javanese families, and about ten percent of the students belonged to Islam and Hinduism. Reportedly, this school requires only half of the education fee that is charged by other schools. This kind of policy is enabled by the huge financial support given to the TDM by the middle-class Chinese. Obviously, these Chinese are happy to be patrons of education. Donation boxes labeled "Kotak Dana Sekolah Buddhis Dharma Widya" (Financial support for Dharma Widya School) have been placed at Vipassana Graha in Bandung and at Buddha Metta Arama in Jakarta. However, the money donated in these two boxes each month is not enough. Therefore,

Wongsin must donate his own money, which has been received from donations by many Chinese devotees.

Dharma Widya also provides opportunities for those who want to study the Bachelor Degree in Buddhist Studies. It is called Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha (STAB), meaning the School for Buddhist Studies in Higher Level, focusing on Buddhism and modern sciences. The STAB's quality is guaranteed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education (Diputhera, 2010, p. 97).

According to my fieldwork in May 2016, Wongsin invited three female students of Mahamakut Buddhist University, Khonkaen Campus, to train the Dharma Widya students in Thai traditional dancing. Not only were trainers brought from Thailand, but dancing uniforms clearly signifying Isaan culture were also brought. After twenty days of training, the Thai dancing by Indonesian students was performed in the public eyes of Buddhists from various parts of Indonesia who came to celebrate the Waisak (Visak) Festival at Borobudur. In this case, Dharma Widya became a place that Thai culture was transmitted in Indonesia.

Because the location of Dharma Widya is in Tangerang, many students who attend this school are therefore Chinese. However, Javanese Buddhists from central Java have been brought to Dharma Widya as well as other schools and Universities every year by Wongsin. Moreover, other family members of those teenagers, such as their parents and older brothers and sisters, are accepted to work in TDM's temples throughout Indonesia. In 2015, more than fifty Javanese workers in TDM's temples are Buddhists, whereas about fifty workers are Javanese and Sundanese Muslims. Accepting Muslims to work in Thai temples is a strategy to compromise with the locals who can help TDM to bridge with other Muslims. However, managing Dharma Widya School, adopting Javanese teenagers as foster children, and bringing Javanese employees to work in Thai temples open an opportunity to the Chinese to support and create relations with the Javanese through those religious activities.

Notably, cultural networks sharpened through shared religious culture of being Buddhists of both Indonesian Chinese and TDM must be stated. Interviews with Linda, Lim, Yani, Herman, and Henry (all pseudonymous) (2015-2016) declare that they support Thai temples because they are also Buddhists. Though this answer is quite simple, it cannot be denied that the shared identity

holding by both TDM members and the Chinese partly facilitates the Buddhist community under cultural network. This is similar to Danis's study of how the Iraqi Christian migrants, who temporarily stay in Turkey, have been facilitated by religious networks (Danis, 2006).

3. Conclusion

All cases discussed in this paper portray how TDM members have been creating networks in Indonesia with the Chinese followers. It starts with categorization of TDM into two periods according to two leaders, Win and Wongsin. While the first leader was from the town traditional monastery who tried to propagate Buddhism in scholarly ways, the second leader, on the contrary, was from the forest tradition and preferred to promote Thai forest traditional masters. The translated books found in both periods are therefore different based upon their backgrounds. Simply put, books also help to portray strategies that Thai monks choose to attract the new patrons.

The following sections continue to answer how Thai monks and Thai ritual can attract Indonesian Chinese. The simplicity and low price of Thai ritual reveals an economic reason that attracts Chinese Buddhists to choose TDM's services. Weekend houses in Thai temples and a magazine for advertising the Chinese patrons' products are used as special cases study to explain why the rich Chinese choose to support Thai temples in both religious as well as non-religious reasons. In addition, TDM's temple provides a magazine for advertising products of the Chinese who donate a lot to the temple. Finally, social welfare is also conducted to satisfy the Chinese who have a Mahayana background. those activities also help to link relationships between the Chinese and the Javanese.

This paper proposes that Thai monks can adapt and survive though they are not surrounded by Thai communities as found in other countries. On the contrary, surrounding and supporting by the Thai patrons do not open opportunities for monks to communicate with the locals in the new land. Moreover, their ways of ritual performance as well as religious interpretation are limited to serve the Thai people who already have their own beliefs and cultures. Those factors ultimately cause Thai temples overseas function for the need of Thai people rather than allowing Buddhism grow in its own way, based on different contexts. Therefore, the case of Thai missionary work in Indonesia can strongly confirm the Thai monks' adaptability.

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