

HOLY INCORRUPTIBLE BODY AND BONE RELICS OF FEMALE BUDDHIST MONKS-CASE OF PILGRIMAGE AND WORSHIPPING TOURISM IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The belief in arhant is deeply rooted in tropical Indochina where Buddhism is the main religious. Similar to Christian and Hinduism, the worshipping of arhant as saint or god can be seen in this area. The specific worshipping of holy incorruptible body and bone relics is generally seen. However, it is extremely rare to see the worshipping of holy incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk. Here, the authors present and discuss on worshipping of holy incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk which is an extremely rare phenomenon in Thailand where the female Buddhist monk is presently not legally acceptable. The holy sites holding incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk become the famous tourist attractions of Thailand at present.

KEYWORDS: Holy, Relics, Body, Done, Female Buddhist Monk, Pilgrimage, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The belief in arhant is deeply rooted in tropical Indochina where Buddhism is the main religious. Similar to Christian and Hinduism, the worshipping of arhant as saint or god can be seen in this area. The specific studies on this issue are limited and it can have implications in several science such as medical science and humanities [1-3].

In fact, the specific worshipping of holy incorruptible body and bone relics is generally seen. However, it is extremely rare to see the worshipping of holy incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk. Here, the authors present and discuss on worshipping of holy

incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk which is an extremely rare phenomenon in Thailand where the female Buddhist monk is presently not legally acceptable.

CASE STUDIES

HOLY INCORRUPTIBLE BODY

There are many famous holy incorruptible bodies of male Buddhist monks in Thailand (more than 500 hundred monks). However, there are less than 10 cases of female Buddhist monks.

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The good examples are Pathum Nun female Buddhist monk at Nakornratchasrima province and Nian female nun at Songka province.

HOLY BONE

Similar to cases of holy incorruptible bodies, there are several specific stupas built for containing holy bone of male Buddhist monk in Thailand and those stupas become famous tourist attraction [4]. For female Buddhist monk cases,

there are extremely few cases. The famous sites are at Suandhamma Chandi Uthit in Udonthani province, MaeChiKaewSeanglum Pagoda in Mukdhaharn province, Upasika Soda Pagoda at Thippaya sathan visudhhimusskhain Dongmorth ongSakonnakorn province, UpasikaKaewPagoda in Sakonnakorn province and Upasika Chan monument at Wat Dhammakayaram, Pathumthan province.



(A)Pathum Nun female Buddhist monk at Nakornratchasrima province



(B)MaeChiKaewSeanglum Pagoda in Mukdhaharn province



(C)Upasika Chan monument at Wat Dhammakayaram, Pathumthani province
Figure 1. Some famous holy sites containing incorruptible body and bone
relics of female Buddhist monk in Thailand

DISCUSSION

Due to interpretation of Buddhism by Thai Buddhist practitioner, the female Buddhist monk is presently not accepted and considered distinction. However, there are some local people who visit to other countries such as Sri Lanka to become female Buddhist monk, which is not legally accepted in Thailand. Of interest, although it is not legally accepted, there are some local worshipping of holy incorruptible bodies and bone relics of female Buddhist monk. The amount of worshipping place is very few and this might be explained by the very few number of female Buddhist monks in Thailand. In addition, all worshipping place is not for female Buddhist monk but female nun who practice as female Buddhist monk. Those mentioned worshipping place become interesting place for pilgrimage and tourism in the country. In fact, the similar sites in other countries where female Buddhist monk are legally accepted such as Taiwan are also the well-known pilgrimage and tourism sites. For example, the Gonggavihara in Taipei is the well-known site

containing holy body of a female Buddhist monk and is the target for pilgrimage of the Buddhist locals and the foreigners [5].

The phenomenon of renovation of female Buddhist monk in Thailand is very interesting and becomes a big challenge to the Buddhism system in Thailand. Whether the difference in acceptability between male and female Buddhist monks in the country reflects some local Asian belief that male is superior than female or not should be further deeply studied. Nevertheless, all of the mentioned holy sites holding incorruptible body and bone relics of female Buddhist monk become the famous tourist attractions of Thailand at present.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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