

Humanistic or Modern Buddhism? Rethinking of the Modernization of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia

Toh Teong Chuan¹ 

Abstract: Humanistic Buddhism was originated in China in the 20th century. It is a form of self-innovation of traditional Chinese Buddhism in the face of new social situations. The Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia were a spreading type of Buddhism, which is the developed form for overseas spread of Chinese Buddhism. In fact, Chinese Buddhism faced different social patterns in the original Chinese and Malaysian societies. How does Chinese Buddhism evolve from traditional Buddhism to humanistic Buddhism in the new society of Malaysia with diverse ethnic groups and religions? This research comprehensively discusses the modernization process of Chinese Buddhism, and then start a new stage of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia, especially in West Coast of Malay Peninsula. Firstly, it is expected to discuss about “what is Humanistic Buddhism”, and then follow by “Why do transform into Humanistic Buddhism” in Malaysian society. Finally, based on the existing observations, to sort out the phenomenon of contemporary Buddhist practice of “how many types of Humanistic Buddhism” in Malaysian.

Keywords: Humanistic Buddhism, Modernization of Chinese Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, pluralistic society

Introduction

Malaysia is situated at a strategic location along the Straits of Malacca. Historically, for an extended period, this region has been an area where Indian religious cultures, including Buddhism and Hinduism, were spread. However, following the introduction and widespread adoption of Islam in the 15th century, the previously culture and beliefs from South Asian, including Buddhism, gradually withdrew from the mainstream faith of the local communities and were replaced by Islamic religious culture originating from Arabia. This trend has continued to the present day.

¹ Toh Teong Chuan is an Associate Professor and Head of Department of Chinese Studies (Kampar Campus) at the University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Malaysia. Contact E-mail: tctoh@utar.edu.my ORCID: 0000-0002-7330-1520

Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia was spread along with the migration of Chinese from Southern China. Ancient Southeast Asia was an Indian Brahmin-Buddhist cultural circle, but ancient Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia disappeared as residents of this region converted to Islam. Only mainland Southeast Asia still retains Buddhist belief as their social mainstream culture. This article deals with Malaysia, which is located in maritime Southeast Asia. The Buddhism that currently exists has no direct relationship with the ancient Buddhism in this region, especially Chinese Buddhism, which was re-introduced by the regional flow of Chinese immigrants in modern times. The formal establishment of Chinese Buddhism is typically marked by the founding of Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang in 1891, which regarding by the scholars as a significant event symbolizing the reintroduction of Chinese Buddhism to the region (Chern 2009, 64, 84). In the early 20th century, with the arrival of reformist monks (新僧) from China, the modern concept of “Humanistic Buddhism” was introduced to Malaysian Chinese communities. However, the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism as a contemporary Buddhist reform concept in China, it has its own historical and social background. Buddhism in Malaysia, should had its distinct social and historical context, and raises the question of whether the spread and development of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia, if only shown a spread type from China, then should be seen as “transplanted Buddhism”? Is Malaysia equipped with the social and historical conditions necessary for the creation and dissemination of Humanistic Buddhism? This study seeks to address these questions by exploring whether the trend of Humanistic Buddhism, which is prominent in contemporary Chinese Buddhism, can be reasonably spread in Malaysia, especially in West Cost of Malay Peninsula. Additionally, it examines how this modern Buddhist trend, within the context of Malaysia’s pluralistic society with its various Buddhist traditions, compares with the original cultural sphere of Chinese Buddhism.

Literature Review

This research was based on some previous research’s founding from local and international scholars. There has been local academic research on the spread and development of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysian Chinese communities. Among them who have contributed significantly to this subject is Tang Chew Peng (陳秋平). In several journal articles, Tang has partially addressed this topic. In his earliest article, “The Spread and Development of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia: A Research Context Regarding Activities of Master Taixu and his Followers in Malaysia,” he traced the journeys of prominent Chinese Buddhist reformers to Southeast Asia, including Master Taixu (太虛, 1890-1947).

Master Taixu himself led a tour of South and Southeast Asia during the early days of the Pacific War and spending time in Malaya, including Singapore. Tang

Chew Peng also detailed the activities of Master Taixu's disciples, such as Venerable Fafang (法舫, 1904-1951), Venerable Cihang (慈航, 1893-1954), Venerable Yanpei (演培, 1917-1996), and also Venerable Zhumo (竺摩, 1913-2002) in Malaya. Tang argued that these visits by Master Taixu and his followers sowed the seeds of Chinese Buddhist reform ideas in Malaysia (Tang 2009, 33). He discussed the concept of "Intellectual Buddhism," observing that Malaysian Chinese Buddhism had transitioned from folk belief forms to the transmission of Buddhist knowledge. According to Tang, the reformist monks from Master Taixu's lineage gradually created an environment conducive to the formation of "Intellectual Buddhism" in Malaysia (Tang 2009, 32). On this foundation, Tang mapped out the genealogy of "Intellectual Buddhism" in Malaysia and suggested that the establishment of Kek Lok Si Temple (極樂寺) in Penang provided a base from which these monks could further extend Buddhist activities into education area, publishing Buddhist magazines, and fostering intellectual monks. Economic growth and increased education among the laity also fueled a demand for intellectual-based Buddhism. Tang Chew Peng concluded that "the future of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia will depend greatly on intellectual exploration. Enhancing the knowledge and thought of Chinese Buddhists is a primary task. Currently, Humanistic Buddhism is one of the major trends in Chinese Buddhism, and how to further spread Humanistic Buddhism is something the Buddhist community should consider." (Tang 2020, 202) He clearly believes that the formation of "Intellectual Buddhism" in Malaysian Chinese Buddhism has positively contributed to the spread of Humanistic Buddhism.

Concerning the propagation of Buddhism in the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore, by Master Taixu and his followers and students, we may refer to Wang Feng's doctoral dissertation in 2017, *The Preaching of Taixu and His disciples in Southeast Asia (1922-1947)*. Wang's research begins in 1922 and ends in 1947, as 1922 marks that "the establishment of the Buddhist Youth League in Beijing, which is where the narrative starts" (Wang 2017, 289), while 1947 is the year of Master Taixu's passing in Shanghai. Wang's timeframe is clearly based on the years of Master Taixu's active life, although he also references the earlier work of Tang Chew Peng. However, Wang utilizes newly compiled and published historical materials on modern Chinese Buddhism, thus extending the timeline of Master Taixu's propagation of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaya to the arrival of Zhang Zongdai (張宗戴) and Ning Dayun (寧達蘊), founders of the Buddhist Youth Association, in Singapore. This approach suggests that the propagation did not necessarily begin with Master Taixu's personal visit to Singapore in 1926. Since Wang sets the year of Master Taixu's passing in Shanghai as the endpoint of his discussion, he does not address the developments after 1947. At that time, Venerable Cihang had not yet been invited to establish the Taiwan Buddhist Institute (臺灣佛學院) in Taiwan and was still residing in Singapore and Malaya, where he continued to exert influence. Additionally, Venerable Fafang had been traveling between Ceylon and Malaya, interacting with and influencing the

local Buddhist community. However, these later developments fall outside the scope of Wang's dissertation.

Regarding Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, one we cannot overlook's research outcome is Bai Yuguo's (白玉國) published monograph in title *A Study of Chinese Buddhist Beliefs in Malaysia*, a outcome based on his doctoral dissertation, which provides a comprehensive exploration of Chinese Buddhist beliefs in Malaysia. This research employs both documentary analysis and fieldwork, including interviews, and it directly engages with key figures in the Malaysian Buddhist community, offering a detailed observation of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia (Bai 2008, 137). Bai points out that the close interaction and exchange between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Malaysia is a rare phenomenon in the global propagation of Buddhism. The meditation practices and lifestyle of Theravāda Buddhism, combined with the morning and evening liturgical practices and social charity ethos of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism, these were creating a unique blend model in the world (Bai 2008, 73; Lee and Ackerman 1997, 62). Bai also inevitably mentions Humanistic Buddhism in multiple instances, though he does not elaborate on how it transitioned or was established in Malaysia. He merely notes that as Mahāyāna Buddhism, specifically for modernizes of Chinese Buddhism, it naturally follows the path of Humanistic Buddhism (Bai 2008, 147), or adopts its ideas to enhance Buddhism's influence (Bai 2008, 152). Consequently, the development and implementation of Humanistic Buddhism within Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia is seen as an inevitable process, one that requires no further argument to substantiate.

Venerable Cihang was among the earliest followers of Master Taixu to reside long-term in Southeast Asia, where he actively propagated Buddhism, particularly the concept of Humanistic Buddhism during his stayed in Malay Peninsula. As early as the 1930s, Venerable Cihang stayed in Myanmar, and throughout much of the 1940s, he was active in the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore. He vigorously promoted the establishment of Buddhist societies, the publication of Buddhist periodicals, and other activities, using both organized events and written materials to spread the ideals of Humanistic Buddhism. Kan Zhengzong's (關正宗) book with title *Pioneer of 'Humanistic Buddhism' in Southeast Asia: Venerable Cihang's Dharma Propagation in Overseas and Taiwan (1910-1954)*, was specifically addresses Cihang's role as a leading figure in the overseas propagation of Master Taixu's ideas. The book offers a historical overview and relatively comprehensive account of Venerable Cihang's efforts in spreading Humanistic Buddhism during and after Master Taixu's lifetime, including his activities in Malaysia and Singapore (Kan 2020).

Based on the aforementioned literature, it can be observed that while research on Humanistic Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia is not entirely absent, it generally only a brief historical framework and outlines, many details was yet to be thoroughly explored. Moreover, the existing studies on Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia share a noticeable commonality: they primarily construct the discourse

of Humanistic Buddhism through the lens of the movement of people and the development of activities about Malaysian Chinese Buddhism. There has been little in-depth exploration of the internal connections between the concept of Humanistic Buddhism with Malaysian Buddhism and society, which was originated from the modernization of Buddhism in China. As the concept of Humanistic Buddhism spread with the movement of reform figures from modern Buddhism in China, the question arises: do the elements that gave rise to this idea in China also exist within Malaysian Buddhism and society? Chinese Buddhism was introduced to Malaysia before the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism, so how did the traditional Chinese Buddhism, which accompanied Chinese immigrants to the south in the 19th century, transform into the modern form of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia? If such a transformation was doing occur, why did it happen? Why did Malaysian society need to reform the traditional Chinese Buddhism to Humanistic Buddhism? If Humanistic Buddhism has indeed been propagated and practiced in Malaysia, are the conditions under which it emerged the same as or different from those in China? Therefore, this study aims to build on previous research to address these key questions and hopes to deepen the study of Humanistic Buddhism within Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia.

The Issue of the Origins of Humanistic Buddhism from the Perspective of Malaysian Buddhism

As a contemporary trend in Chinese Buddhism, Humanistic Buddhism was be considered as a modernized model that emerged as traditional Chinese Buddhism adapted and renewed itself upon entering modern society. While the various Chinese Buddhist organizations in the Greater China region that practice and promote Humanistic Buddhism exhibit different emphases in terms of thought and social practice, but their overall trends remain consistent (Deng 2008). The modernization of Chinese Buddhism has its historical and social factors, which have been discussed by many scholars from various perspectives previously. This paper focuses on verifying the promotion and practice of Humanistic Buddhism within Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. In fact, the roots of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia should be trace back to the broader Chinese Buddhist tradition of the Greater China region. Consequently, since the early 20th century, the Buddhist thoughts and practices which developed in the Greater China region have often influenced Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. Therefore, this study examines the origins of Humanistic Buddhism in modern and contemporary Chinese Buddhism specifically from the Malaysian perspective, in order to assess and verify the spread of this modernized model of Chinese Buddhism, that we so call it as Humanistic Buddhism, within Malaysian Chinese Buddhism.

From the perspective of Malaysia, the Chinese Buddhism in China created their

modernization model of Humanistic Buddhism, was related to the following five factors:

The external stimulus of the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” (廟產興學) sparked a trend of Buddhist schools being established.

The new political situation after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty required Chinese Buddhism to update its strategies for engaging with secular society.

The spirit of the age, especially the movement to promote the New Social Culture and its campaign against superstition, necessitated a response from Chinese Buddhism.

The decline of Buddhism during the Qing dynasty, where it was reduced to mainly serving funeral rites, prompted a need for self-renewal.

Traditional reclusive Buddhism needed to connect with the new era and society, fostering a more active engagement with the broader social context.

These five points can be categorized into two groups: firstly, the external societal stimuli, and the secondly was the internal demands for self-adjustment within Buddhism. Below is a brief discussion of each factor.

1. *The external stimulus of the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” sparked a trend of Buddhist schools being established.* The “using the temple property for educational development purpose” was emerged during the late Qing and early Republican Era, as the Chinese government were faced with a weakening nation and society, they recognized that they strongly need to promote and improve the education standard to rejuvenate the country. This was seen as essential for reversing China’s longstanding weakness in comparison to the strength of foreign powers. However, establishing educational institutions was required financial investment from the national treasury, which was nearly depleted at the time. The government’s desire to promote and expand modern education was left unfulfilled due to a lack of funds. The fact is, without modern education, it would be difficult to implement long-term strategies to revive the nation. a reality made evident by neighbouring Japan, which served as a successful model for China. In light of this, the government turned to the wealth accumulated over the centuries by Buddhist and Taoist temples. Although this policy was not specifically targeted at Buddhism, the relative weakness of Taoism meant that Buddhist temples, which were far more numerous, bore the brunt of the impact. While revitalizing the nation through education was certainly beneficial in the long run, the implementation of the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” became a tool for local elites to seize temple assets for personal gain, leading to widespread opposition from the Buddhist community.

Although there is already substantial research on the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” and its details (Huang 2006), which need not be elaborated upon here, it is important to emphasize that, prior to the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism, Chinese Buddhist temples had amassed considerable wealth but were relatively disengaged from social activities. As a result, the financial

contributions made by Buddhism to society were disproportionate to the resources it received, it was cause to negative perceptions of Buddhism from the society, in some cases, someone were envy of its wealth. While the appropriation of temple assets to fund education, aimed at rejuvenating the nation, it was not necessarily a bad idea, the corruption in the bureaucracy and broader society prompted temples, which were aware of these societal issues, to activate defensive mechanisms and resist the policy. It can be argued that the two wave of “using the temple property for educational development purpose” movements initiated by the government in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican Era were served as strong external stimuli, forcing Chinese Buddhism in China to contemplate how to respond to and develop within the new social situation². These movements led to the spontaneous establishment of Buddhist schools and the initiation of charitable activities, connecting Buddhism with the global wave of modernization and civil society. This, in turn, paved the way for the development and practice of Humanistic Buddhism, a natural outcome of these evolving circumstances.

2. *The new political situation after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty required Chinese Buddhism to update its strategies for engaging with secular society.* The success of the 1911 Revolution was not only overthrew the Qing dynasty, but also brought an end to the imperial political system that had governed China for millennia. This monumental political and structural shift in the state triggered a series of social reforms to address the new circumstances. For nearly two thousand years, Chinese Buddhism had operated under the imperial system, and its societal structures and functions were shaped by this overarching political framework, giving Chinese Buddhism its traditional characteristics. The end of the imperial system signalled a change in the power structures across society, compelling Chinese Buddhism, it should be a part of the broader social fabric, to adapt to the needs of this new political and social reality.

This was a time of great historical upheaval, and Chinese Buddhism found itself confronted with an entirely new social and political situation, that required fresh strategies for survival and relevance. The emergence of Humanistic Buddhism was a response to these new conditions, as Chinese Buddhism sought to reorient itself in this dramatically different era through self-adjustment and reconstruction, presenting a new face of Buddhism for modern times.

3. *The spirit of the age, especially the movement to promote the New Social Culture and its campaign against superstition, necessitated a response from Chinese Buddhism:* The New Culture Movement was launched by the government in 1915, along with the subsequent May Fourth Movement, both had profound and lasting effects on modern Chinese society. Whether these two movements should be considered distinct or part of the same broader effort has been widely debated, and many studies

² The first wave during the late Qing period was initiated and implemented in 1898, driven by Zhang Zhidong's efforts. The second wave occurred between 1927 and 1938, resulting from the educational policies of the Nanjing Nationalist Government during the Republican era.

have already offered various interpretations. However, this paper will not delve into those discussions. The key point here is that, following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, society faced the daunting task of rebuilding. The New Culture Movement, in particular, led to a series of social movements aimed at reforming various aspects of Chinese political and cultural life.

As a historian concerned with the cultural changes in modern China, Yu, Ying-Shi (余英時) has noted that, this was an era of radicalism, however, in which the boundaries between progressive and conservative stances were often fluid. In fact, what was considered progressive at one moment, it could quickly be viewed as conservative the next, once the more radical factions were emerged (Yu 1994, 188-222). During this period, modern ideas and knowledge from Euro-American flooded into China, rapidly rendering older forms of knowledge obsolete. Traditional religious beliefs, including Buddhism, were increasingly viewed by those pursuing modern knowledge as outdated and superstitious, relics of a feudal past that had no place in a rapidly modernizing world.

The far-sighted individuals who will recognized that, a religious tradition passed down from ancient era like Buddhism who were to survive, it should need to updated to align with new knowledge and ideas, particularly those informed by scientifically new knowledge. As a result, Chinese Buddhism had to either transform or deeply re-examine doctrines that had previously been overlooked or underemphasized. This led to the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism, a modernized version of the faith that was capable of responding to the demands of the new social landscape.

4. *The decline of Buddhism during the Qing dynasty, where it was reduced to mainly serving funeral rites, prompted a need for self-renewal.* Although Buddhism had been spread in China for over 2000 years,³ the Buddhism that continued into the early 20th century was essentially an extension of Qing dynasty Buddhism. During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, the government divided Buddhism into three distinct systems for administrative purposes. Under the Yuan, these systems were *Meditating* (宗, Chan Buddhism), *Teaching* (教, Sermon Buddhism), and *Vinaya* (律, Vinaya Buddhism). The Ming dynasty continued this policy, but reclassified them into *Meditating* (宗, Chan Buddhism), *Religious Services* (教, Ritual Buddhism), and *Teaching* (講, Sermon Buddhism). Notably, the category of Ritual Buddhism, which referred to monks and temples primarily involved in religious rituals for society and public, indicated the growing emphasis on ritual services within Chinese Buddhism. By the Qing dynasty, this focus on ritual services had become even more pronounced.

In the early Qing period, the government abolished the requirement for monks to obtain *Dudie* (度牒, Certificate of ordination of a monk), and the examination system for monastic ordination was also abandoned. This led to a significant decline in

³ In 1998, the Chinese Buddhist community in China celebrated the 2000th anniversary of the spread of Buddhism into China, which citing the first year of Yuanshou 元壽 (-2 BC) when the Great Yuezhi envoy orally dictated the “Buddha Sutra”.

the cultural literacy of the monastic community. After 300 years of the Qing dynasty, the propagation of Buddhist doctrines had diminished, and monks who primarily performed ritual services became the dominant group for Chinese Buddhism in China.

Master Taixu was promoted his Humanistic Buddhism ideas since the early 20th century, aimed to address the low educated of monks and the reduction of Chinese Buddhism to funeral services. In earlier historical periods, the illiteracy and lack of education among the general population meant that this ritual-focused Buddhism was accepted without much criticism from the society. However, with the abolition of the imperial examination system and implement of the modern education system, the gradual spread of education began to change the societal expectations. The increasing criticism of ritual-based Buddhism prompted a self-driven reform within the Buddhist community, leading to the advocacy of a new model, a modernized form of Buddhism, known as the Humanistic Buddhism, which responded to the need for self-renewal within the tradition.

5. *Traditional reclusive Buddhism needed to connect with the new era and society, fostering a more active engagement with the broader social context.* The development of Chinese Buddhism as predominantly in unsociable style had specific historical and societal conditions. Externally, the imperial government's cautious attitude toward religious organizations led to policies that physically separated Buddhist clergy from everyday society, while simultaneously granting large areas of land for monastic development. On the one hand, the government allowed the construction of temples and agricultural development in these isolated mountain areas: on the other, it imposed legal restrictions that minimized interactions between monks and laypeople. As a result, the image of Chinese Buddhist monks retreating to the mountains and abstaining from societal involvement, just because of the normative expectation. Internally, the religious needs of Chinese Buddhism, particularly the rise of Chan (Zen) Buddhism since the Song dynasty, will encouraged the monastic tradition of retreating to remote areas for intensive meditation. However, this mountain-based form of Buddhism was economically sustainable because it was supported by land donations and aristocratic patronage, allowing monks to avoid relying on alms from the public, as was customary in Indian Buddhism. The self-sufficiency of mountain monasteries, sustained through temple lands and tenant farmers, allowed monks to remain detached from society while maintaining economic stability.

Despite its stability, this reclusive form of Chinese Buddhism, which accumulated wealth from society but did little to contribute to social welfare, faced sociality. With the collapse of the imperial system, the social constraints that previously restricted Buddhist engagement with society disappeared, creating opportunities and necessities for Buddhism to play a more active role in social life. This change in the political situation, coupled with the broader modernization of society, provided the backdrop for the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism, a movement toward greater

social involvement and modernization within the Buddhist tradition.

The five factors outlined above, firstly the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” was the initial government-led movement, the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the labeling of Buddhist belief as superstition by most of the intellectuals, the role of Buddhism in funerary rites, and the tradition of reclusive Buddhism — constitute primarily indirect social and historical influences. However, their impact on Buddhism cannot be entirely dismissed.

Among the five factors outlined above, the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” was a direct threat to the survival of religious institutions, particularly Buddhist ones. While this threat did not originate from within the religion itself, it necessitated a proactive response and adaptation from Buddhist communities. The end of Qing rule, a significant political event, had far-reaching societal implications. Buddhism, as a religious tradition deeply embedded in society, could not remain unaffected. The emergence of a modern society demanded a reevaluation of Buddhist practices and beliefs. Even those two factors were indirect social and historical influences. their impact on Chinese Buddhism in China cannot be entirely dismissed.

The labeling of Buddhist belief as superstition by traditional intellectuals, particularly those influenced by 20th-century scientific thought, presented a direct challenge to the religion’s legitimacy. To ensure its continued relevance, Buddhism had to address these criticisms and reassert its value in the modern world. The fourth and fifth factors, the role of Buddhism in funerary rites and the tradition of reclusive Buddhism, respectively, also contributed to the challenges faced by Buddhism in the 20th century. These practices, while rooted in traditional Buddhist teachings, were often perceived as outdated and incompatible with the demands of modern society.

Humanistic Buddhism, a movement that emerged in response to these challenges, advocated for a reinterpretation of Buddhist teachings to align with the values and aspirations of modern society in China. By emphasizing the practical application of Buddhist principles in daily life, Humanistic Buddhism sought to bridge the gap between traditional Buddhist practices and the needs of contemporary individuals.

Reflections on the Formation of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysian Chinese Buddhism

The rise of Humanistic Buddhism as the contemporary mainstream trend in modern Chinese Buddhism in China, it was emerged as a new development stimulated by a series of political and social factors since the late Qing Dynasty to the Republican era. This development was driven by both external environmental stimuli and internal adjustments within Buddhism, aims to address the new conditions of the era. From

this perspective, does the Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia also exhibit the five factors discussed above, that contribute to the emergence of this updated form of Humanistic Buddhism?

If we examine the five major factors listed in the previous section, we should find that, for the first factor, the “using the temple property for educational development purpose” as a external stimulus, does not exist in the Chinese community in Malaysia. The Chinese Buddhism that spread to Malaysia with the arrival of the Chinese immigrants did not have the extensive temple properties, that were present in earlier stages of Chinese Buddhism’s dissemination. As a result, there was no situation in which local authorities or society would covet temple properties for the purpose of educational allocation in early Malaysia.

The strong stimulus of reallocating temple properties, which could create a sense of existential crisis and panic within the Buddhist community, and the subsequent contemplation of adaptive strategies, was not a characteristic of early immigrant Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. However, this does not imply that Buddhism in the Malayan colonial Chinese society existed without any sense of crisis. While the risk of losing temple property was not a concern due to the lack of a long-standing historical legacy of temple properties, the absence of such properties meant that monks had to continuously interact with society to secure their daily economic needs, and which represents a different issue.

The second factor, the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and the emergence of new social conditions created a historical context that necessitated updates for Chinese Buddhism. For the Malayan Chinese community was in the British colonies at that period, this represented significant political upheaval in their homeland, but did not constitute a social transformation within the colonies themselves. In practical terms, until Federal Malaya’s independence in 1957, there was no issue of nationality for the Malayan Chinese in the British colonies: although their focus remained on China while they sought to make a living locally. Nevertheless, regarding the objective environment of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, the colonial social system continued without revolutionary changes. Therefore, in terms of local conditions, there was no external stimulus necessitating innovation and adaptation for Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. The only factor was the transmission and reception of information from the homeland, which cannot be said to have directly influenced the local Malayan Chinese Buddhism.

The third factor, regarding the issue of “the spirit of the age, especially the movement to promote the New Social Culture and its campaign against superstition, necessitated a response from Chinese Buddhism”, prior to Federal Malaya’s independence, the Chinese community in Malaya still regarded their ancestral homeland, China, as their motherland and also hometown. Even before Malaya’s independence in 1957, that mean during the colonial period, the migration of Chinese people was continued. In the late Qing Dynasty, China experienced persistent social turmoil and

economic difficulties. In contrast, Southeast Asia, including Peninsula Malaya, was experiencing economic prosperity, which attracted Chinese immigrants seeking new opportunities.

Compared to earlier waves of immigrants, the Chinese those arriving in the 20th century had a deeper connection with their homeland. The New Culture Movement in Republic of China, which advocated against superstition and for scientific thinking, indeed had an impact on the Chinese community in Malaysia. In fact, a number of literary essays from 20th century Chinese modernist writers were becoming as content in Chinese language textbooks in Malaysia. Their mostly opposition to traditional superstitious religions and advocacy for modern scientific thinking were transmitted to Chinese students through education system. However, this influence was primarily felt by educated youths from Chinese educational backgrounds and the subsequent generations influenced by them. It was more of a subtle influence rather than a direct adherence.

Nonetheless, there was indeed a critical and questioning attitude towards traditional beliefs and cultures, including Buddhism, within the Chinese community in Malaysia, reflecting the impact of the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement in China.

Regarding the issue of “the decline of Buddhism during the Qing dynasty, where it was reduced to mainly serving funeral rites”, it is accurate to say that, the early Chinese Buddhism that came with the Chinese immigrants to Malaysia was initially focused on folk beliefs and funeral services, rather than doctrinally oriented Intellectual Buddhism. The Southern transmission of the Caodong lineage (曹洞法脈) of Chan Buddhism, represented by Kek Lok Si Temple (鶴山極樂寺) in Penang, brought Chan monks to the region. However, the second abbot of Kek Lok Si Temple, Venerable Benzhong (本忠), who was promoted the practice of “Chan Practice in Buddha-name Recitation” (念佛禪) and even established the “Buddha-name Recitation Lotus Society” (念佛蓮社), which clearly reflects the Qing Dynasty trend of Pure Land Buddhism centered on the practice of reciting Buddha’s name in traditional Chinese Buddhism in China.

Additionally, among the three major systems of Qing Dynasty Buddhist monks and temples, while it cannot be said that there were no monks who taught Buddhist doctrines coming to Malaysia, but their impact was relatively very limited. The majority of monks were from the ritual-oriented Buddhist group, focusing primarily on ritual services and rarely engaging in doctrinal teachings. Therefore, the issue of doctrinal decline faced by modern Chinese Buddhism reform also existed within the Chinese Buddhist community in Malaysia. In this respect, the environment faced by the Humanistic Buddhism promoted by Chinese Buddhism is also reflective of the real conditions of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia.

Lastly, concerning the issue of mountain-based reclusive Buddhism in the traditional sense, this does not pertain to the context of Chinese Buddhism in

Malaysia. Similar to the background of temple-based education, the Chinese Buddhism in early period of Malaysia was characterized by a radiative propagation model, most of Chinese Buddhist temples in Malaysia were without a historical background of long-term settlement in the mountains. Economically, there was no condition for a secluded, mountain-dwelling existence separate from society. On the contrary, Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia needed to connect with society to sustain its economic foundation. For instance, in our investigations from recent years, Guangfu Cave Temple (廣福岩寺), located in Simpang Pulai on the southern outskirts of Ipoh, Perak State, was originally established as a cave temple in the late 19th century. By the early 20th century, the succeeding abbot sought to be closer to the urban area for better interaction with the society. As a result, the religious services offered by this temple, such as rituals, cremation services, and even cave tours, became more popular in the more accessible Sam Poh Tong (三寶洞), compared to the relatively remote Guangfu Cave Temple. The latter eventually became a residence and retreat for monks only, and in recent years, it has been managed only by laypeople (Toh 2017, 195). This illustrates that engagement with society is a necessary condition for the survival of Buddhist temples and monks in Malaysia. The socialized Buddhism advocated by modern Chinese Buddhism has, in fact, become the norm for Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia.

As Humanistic Buddhism evolves within the context of modern Chinese Buddhism, its practices and concepts differ from those of traditional Chinese Buddhism. Traditional Chinese Buddhism was rooted in the imperial and clan-based social system, while Humanistic Buddhism emerged in the modern political and civic society following the end of imperial rule (Deng 2016). In Malaysia, Chinese Buddhism re-established itself during the British colonial era (Chern 2009). In the context of Chinese Buddhism, the call for reform began in 1912, the year following the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, marking the onset of the Republican era. This fervent call for Buddhist reform spearheaded by Master Taixu (1890-1947), and evolved into his lifelong advocacy of a Buddhist reform movement characterized by the slogan “Humanistic Buddhism” after year 1927. Thus, the formal promotion of Chinese Buddhist reform coincided with the advent of a new era and new social conditions in China.

From this perspective, the advocacy of Humanistic Buddhism represents the self-transformation and adaptation of traditional Chinese Buddhism as it transitioned from the Qing Dynasty to the Republican era, responding to the new social circumstances. When examining Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, the establishment of the Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang, which marked the “re-established” of modern Chinese Buddhism, occurred during a period when China was still under the late Qing Dynasty. However, in British colonial Malaya, which continued until Federal Malaya’s independence in 1957, the colonial era persisted until the establishment of the new nation. This means that from the arrival of Venerable Miaolian (妙蓮,

1824-1907) in 1887 and the construction of Kek Lok Si Temple in 1891 (Toh 2014, 998-1001), to the visit of Master Taixu and his disciples in 1939,⁴ and the activities of the modern monks led by Master Taixu before Federal Malaya's independence, the political and social systems of the British colony in Peninsula Malaya remained largely unchanged. Despite the rapid social changes and political upheavals in China, which continuously prompted the Master Taixu-led modernist monks to adjust their Chinese Buddhist reform discourse, Malaya's colonial political and social systems did not experience similar transformative pressures.

Given the continuity of the colonial system in Malaya, there were no local external stimuli prompting Buddhist reform similar to the factors observed in China. Even after Federal Malaya's independence in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963, Malaya did not experience the same factors as those driving reform in China, such as the establishment of educational institutions using temple properties or the issues related to mountain-based reclusive Buddhism.⁵

Thus, does this suggest that Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia is merely a "transplanted" form of Buddhism?

Analysis of the Background and Roots of the Humanistic Buddhism Movement in Malaysian Chinese Buddhism

As discussed above, Humanistic Buddhism originated from the specific historical and social conditions of mainland China. For Malaysia, as previously mentioned, the same factors may not be fully founded. However, this does not preclude the possibility of Humanistic Buddhism emerging in Malaysia. Malaysia's strategic location serves as a crossroads for both Southern and Northern transmission of Buddhism. When discussing Buddhism in Malaysia, even if focusing solely on Chinese Buddhism, one cannot isolate it from other forms of Buddhism. It is essential to consider that the social environment in which Malaysian Chinese Buddhism operates is one of multiple Buddhist traditions.

Even though there may be linguistic barriers between different Buddhist traditions, this does not exclude the possibility of interactions and exchanges between Chinese and Southern transmission Buddhism. Malaysian Southern transmission

⁴ During the War of Resistance, Master Taixu led a delegation on a tour of South and Southeast Asia starting in 1939, and in 1940, he traveled extensively throughout British Malaya. In addition to delivering wartime speeches to the overseas Chinese community, his talks also included advocacy for Humanistic Buddhism.

⁵ In addition to the influence of the new cultural anti-superstition social movement from China during the Republican period on the Chinese community, it should be noted that according to the five official national principles proclaimed during the 1970 National Day and still in effect today, the first principle is "Belief in God." Under the state religion of Islam in Malaysia, this refers to the belief in the one true God, or more broadly, to the faith in deities worshipped by various ethnic and religious groups. Within this framework, there is no discourse that denies religious and divine beliefs.

Buddhism includes Thai Buddhism, which has deep historical roots in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, Myanmar Buddhism, which has historical geographic and economic connections, and Ceylon Buddhism, which arrived due to the movement of people during the British colonial era. Despite differences in form and language among these non-Chinese Buddhist traditions and Chinese Buddhism, their commonalities remain significant for those inclined towards Buddhist beliefs. In a multi-religious society, all these traditions belong to the same religion. Not only are there connections among the lay followers, but there are also interactions and exchanges among monks and temples within the Buddhist community.⁶ In this way, the Buddhist beliefs and social context of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia was different from those of Chinese Buddhism in China. Therefore, Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia should not be equated with Chinese Buddhism in China.

If we place the development of Humanistic Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism within a broader historical context, it is actually the result of Buddhism's self-renewal in overall Eastern world, and adaptation in response to the strong spread of Western colonial and modern culture. Under the influence of Western modern cultural dissemination, Eastern Buddhism has had to adjust itself to the new era's society. This includes the emergence of "Human Buddhism" in Japanese Buddhism following the Meiji Restoration in the 19th century, the concept of "Nationalistic Buddhism" in Ceylon Buddhism as a response to Christian challenges during British colonial rule, the active social engagement of Burmese Buddhism under the British colonial backdrop of a crumbling monarchy, and the widespread trend of "Engaged Buddhism" in Southeast Asia (Song 2008, 103; Song 2018, 420), all of which exhibit different religious and social practice models compared to previous forms of Buddhism.

However, this does not imply that the invasion of Western colonial powers is a prerequisite for stimulating local Buddhist modernization. Such an explanation would not account for the modernization of Buddhism in societies, like Thailand, Japan, and China, which did not experience Western colonial rule. Since the Age of Exploration, Eastern societies have faced various forms of Western cultural and political intrusion and penetration. The trend of modernization has often been modelled after Western rationalization. In this context, the Buddhist reform led by Master Taixu and the subsequent advocacy of Humanistic Buddhism have contributed to the modernization of traditional Chinese Buddhism. Thus, the modernization of Chinese Buddhism and the overall modernization of Eastern Buddhism under the influence of Western cultural dominance have been progressing in parallel (He 2006, 44).

In the context of the broader modernization of Eastern Buddhism, the emergence of

⁶ Before its independence, Singapore was part of the Malay Peninsula and, as a Straits Settlement, was politically integrated with Penang and Malacca, which were also British colonies. Despite their historical differences, these regions shared common colonial backgrounds. Regarding the interactions and exchanges among various Buddhist sects and their followers, existing research, such as that by Xu Yantai, has demonstrated the historical facts of the interaction and integration between Southern and Northern transmission of Buddhism in early Singapore.

Humanistic Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, while not fully replicating the five factors present in the origin of Humanistic Buddhism in China, still reflects significant influences from its environment. Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia, having developed in a multicultural Buddhist milieu, interacts with and draws from various Theravāda traditions, including those from Ceylon, Myanmar, and Thailand, each of which has undergone modernization in its own country.

It is noteworthy that Theravāda Buddhist in Malaysia organizations have maintained close connections with their countries of origin, with monks often being sent from these countries to Malaysia. As such, Theravāda Buddhism in Malaysia is familiar with the trends of modernization and adaptation that have occurred in South and Southeast Asia, which in response to Western influences.

Thus, the sources of innovation for Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia during the colonial period and in post-independence Malaysia, can be categorized into three aspects:

1. The modernization trends of Chinese Buddhism in China,
2. The interactions with Theravāda Buddhism in Malaysia, and
3. The contemporary influences of the Malaysian social environment.

Regarding the first aspect, “The modernization trends of Chinese Buddhism in China”, Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia is a result of the cross-regional transmission of Chinese Buddhism from China, with early Chinese Buddhism serving as its direct source. Prior to Federal Malaya’s independence in 1957, Chinese Buddhism in mainland China and Malaysia had a close relationship as origin and branch. This relationship was not limited to the earlier Qing Dynasty transmission, but also included the reformist Buddhist orders that emerged after the 1911 Revolution. These reformist groups, in the historical context of Chinese monks traveling across the South China Seas, frequently passed through Malaya to propagate the Dharma or even settled long-term, engaging in missionary activities. Some became the first generation of Malaysian Mahayana monks. Therefore, the innovations in Chinese Buddhism in China have long served as an intellectual resource for Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. Even though Malaysia may not fully fulfil the historical background and conditions of Chinese Buddhism in China, it still absorbed the reformist ideas of Chinese Buddhism disseminated from China, just as the Chinese diaspora in colonial Malaya had previously accepted traditional Chinese Buddhism.

In this sense, if Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia were solely influenced by this single factor, derived from its origin in China, it could indeed be seen as a “transplanted” Buddhism. This would suggest that, with excluded the specific historical and social context that gave rise to Humanistic Buddhism, it was instead imported into the Malaysian Chinese community through dissemination. However, if the emergence of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia were solely the result of this single source, it

could be categorized as “transplanted”. Nonetheless, despite Chinese Buddhism’s transmission from China or from the Greater China region, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, it has undeniably taken root in Malaysia and necessarily engages with Malaysia’s unique historical and social elements. Thus, the transmission of Chinese Buddhism from Greater China is not the sole factor in its development in Malaysia. There are additional influences from Theravāda Buddhism from neighbouring countries, also transmitted from its source regions, as well as from Malaysia’s own unique political, economic, and social elements, all of which exert certain pressures and stimuli on Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia.

Secondly, Theravāda Buddhism in Malaysia is divided into three major traditions: Ceylon (Sri Lankan), Burmese, and Thai Buddhism. Although Theravāda Buddhism claims to be the original form of Buddhism, more closely aligned with the Buddha’s teachings, an assertion not necessarily acknowledged by Mahayana Buddhism, there is an undeniable historical reality. Even before the British colonial period in Malaya, Thai Buddhism had already taken root in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. Similarly, Burmese Buddhism also spread into northern Malaya, particularly around the northern part of the Straits of Malacca, through economic flows and population movements between Peninsula Malaya, Thailand, Burma, and Sumatra. Ceylon Buddhism, due to the British colonial background, was also transmitted and established itself as migration of people within the colonial empire. Thus, the history of Theravāda Buddhism in the Malay Peninsula is no shorter than that of Mahayana Buddhism, and its reach extends beyond its own ethnic communities, including English-speaking Chinese communities.

Through the mutual observation and interaction between monks of different traditions, as well as the indirect exchanges among lay followers, it is clear that the understanding and acceptance of Theravāda Buddhism within Mahayana Buddhism in Malaysia are likely deeper than in Chinese Buddhism in China at its source. Despite maintaining their distinct traditions, when different Buddhist systems coexist and interact, their similarities and differences naturally provoke reflection and critical thought. Nonetheless, more comprehensive data is needed for an in-depth analysis of these interactions. For now, it is important to highlight that Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia exists in relation to other non-Mahayana Buddhist traditions, which provides it with different reference points for understanding what Buddhism fundamentally is. This differs from the context in China, where Chinese Buddhism is more isolated from these influences. For instance, after the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism, the concept of a “Human Buddha” requires significant emphasis and explanation within the framework of Chinese Buddhism tradition. However, within the context of Theravāda Buddhism, such ideas are already widely accepted and have a well-established intellectual foundation, making them more intuitive and requiring less elaborate advocacy and explanation. For instance, Humanistic Buddhism posits the Buddha as a human being, rejecting the notion of a divine or supernatural entity.

Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of early Buddhist texts, such as the *Agamas*. For Malaysian Buddhists, these ideas are not entirely novel or revolutionary, as they align with the fundamental tenets of Theravada Buddhism. The diverse socio-religious landscape of Malaysia, with its strong Theravada Buddhist influence, has provided a fertile ground for the acceptance of Humanistic Buddhism's modern religious concepts. They articulated comparable Buddhist ideas using the Chinese language and its rich cultural connotations. Therefore, more followers from Chinese society will accept their teaching.

Although there is still a lack of accurate data to discuss the mutual influence between Theravada Buddhism and Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, the mutual exchange and influence between the two should exist. For example, people can find Chinese Buddhist Guanyin enshrined in Theravada Buddhist temples, which is due to the needs of Chinese believers. On the other hand, ordinary Chinese Buddhists do not actually distinguish between Theravada Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism, and regard them as Buddhism. Moreover, Theravada Buddhism has a longer history of spreading in Malaysia than Chinese Buddhism. It can be said that the environment in which Chinese Buddhism spreads is inseparable from Theravada Buddhism. A concrete example of this is the celebration of the Buddha's birthday. While Chinese Buddhism observes a specific date, Malaysian Buddhism, predominantly Theravada, celebrates Vesak. Despite the numerical dominance of Chinese Buddhists in Malaysia, there is a notable compromise, with Chinese Buddhist communities often adopting the Theravada tradition of celebrating Vesak, diverging from the practices prevalent in Great Chinese area.

Thirdly, the "The contemporary influences of the Malaysian social environment" represents a distinct local factor, different from those at the origin of Chinese Buddhism in China. In its homeland, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese Buddhism in China often had the financial backing of the imperial family, nobility, or high-ranking officials, and political concerns about religious groups led to either voluntary or forced isolation of Buddhist communities from society. In Malaysia, most of the Buddhist temples were lacked of governmental support, and during their formative years, they did not possess the substantial assets required for a secluded monastic lifestyle. Buddhist communities or temples had to engage with society to survive. Beyond traditional rituals and ceremonies, early Chinese Buddhist groups, such as the Kek Lok Si Temple, even conceived and implemented the idea of running a Buddhist enterprise, aiming to sustain the temple's economy and support social welfare initiatives through business revenues.

Involving Buddhist groups in commercial activities is generally viewed as a development tied to modern, urban-based Humanistic Buddhism, representing a new model of temple economics. Yet, as early as a hundred years ago in Penang, Malaya, Kek Lok Si Temple which was originally affiliated with the traditional non-Humanistic Buddhist group from Gushan Yongquan Temple (鼓山湧泉寺) in East

Fujian, was compelled by the realities of colonial Malaya to explore business ventures as a means of survival. The temple engaged in commerce not only to support itself but also to fund charitable activities. Although these ventures ultimately failed, largely due to the global economic instability of the time, the fact that Kek Lok Si, rooted in the traditional Chinese Buddhism, ran a business in colonial Penang shows that the social conditions of Chinese Buddhism in Malaya were fundamentally different from those in China.

This local context led to a unique form of Buddhist practice that was more socially engaged. Therefore, even without the transmission of reformist ideas from China, it is likely that modernized forms of Chinese Buddhism would have still emerged in Malaysia, as Buddhist groups there responded to their distinct social environment.

Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the current manifestation of Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia results from three key factors: firstly, it is derived from the Chinese Buddhist traditions originating from China; secondly, it interacts with the diverse Buddhist ecosystem present in Malaysian society; and thirdly, it is influenced by various external economic and social factors. The interplay of these three conditions provides a rational basis for the existence of Humanistic Buddhism within the local context, thereby enabling its continued propagation and further development.

Humanistic Buddhism represents the contemporary mainstream trend within Chinese Buddhism across the Greater China region. This trend aligns with the broader modernization transformations occurring within Eastern Buddhism. However, the modernization of Buddhism in various Eastern countries has produced distinct regional characteristics. Within the Greater China region, Humanistic Buddhism has emerged as the modernization model of Chinese Buddhism. In Malaysia, Buddhism is also propagated: Sri Lankan Buddhism arrived and established roots with the migration of Sinhalese people, Burmese Buddhism entered through the migration of Burmese populations, and Thai Buddhism spread due to geographic proximity and population movement. Similarly, Chinese Buddhism spread with the arrival of Chinese immigrants, all influenced by the colonial era. Each Buddhist tradition maintains some connection with its place of origin, yet they interact and influence each other locally, creating a comprehensive Buddhist situation in Malaysia.

By historically, Chinese Buddhism was maintained personnel exchanges with its origins in Greater China region. However, after the mid-20th century, the connection between Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia and the Mainland China experienced disruption and shift, with recent efforts to re-establish ties, albeit in a different context. After the independence of Malaysia, Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia not only absorbed new information from its origins but also developed distinct historical

trajectories and circumstances within its multicultural environment. In terms of the modernization of Chinese Buddhism, if the formalization and systematic articulation of this modernization are attributed to the Humanistic Buddhism movement initiated by Master Taixu, then the nascent stages of Chinese Buddhism modernization in Malaysia was evident even before Master Taixu's reforms. For example, the establishment of Buddhist enterprises by the Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang, aimed at creating schools and hospitals for the Chinese community and also the society, marked an early initiation of this modernization process. The external societal conditions stimulating the modernization of Chinese Buddhism were already present in Malaya, without relying solely on reformist information from its place of origin.

Before the nation-building of Malaysia, the Chinese Buddhist monks were mostly primarily from Southern China. The migration of reformist monks and their residence in the region were extensions of the modernization trends in Chinese Buddhism from the homeland, crossing the South China Sea to influence Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia. Despite the reformist monks and laypeople not being the majority in the overall Chinese Buddhist community in Malaysia, their impact on the dissemination of modern Buddhist knowledge has been significant. Humanistic Buddhism thoughts are present and influential among intellectuals in the Chinese Buddhist communities of Malay(si), but they do not represent a distinct sect or separate group from other forms of Chinese Buddhism. Humanistic Buddhism advocates for the modernization of Chinese Buddhism, emphasizing worldly relief and social participation, but does not imply the establishment of a new sect or separate organization.

Thus, when Malaysian Buddhism draws upon Humanistic Buddhism from China as a model for its own modernization, it should not be viewed as a mere replication or transplantation. Rather, it develops within the specific social context of Malaysia, shaped by interactions with other Buddhist traditions. This interaction forms the larger environment in which Malaysian Chinese Buddhism operates, and it is only natural that the most similar source tradition, the Chinese Mahayana Buddhist modernization, serves as a point of reference. This does not indicate a lack of agency or independence.

Moreover, the future development of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia will continue to intersect with both the ongoing evolution of Chinese Buddhism in Greater China region and the various Buddhist traditions in local society. These, alongside the continuous growth of Malaysian society, will shape the future of Chinese Buddhism in the country. This complex interplay of factors is expected to drive the future progress of Malaysian Chinese Buddhism.

References

- Bai, Yuguo. 白玉國. 2008. *The Studies on Buddhist Belief of Malaysian Chinese* 馬來西亞華人佛教信仰研究. Chengdu: Bashu Book Press of Sichuan Publishing Group.
- Chern, Meei-Hwa. 陳美華. 2009. "Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia: The Historical Trail, Respreding and Taking Root" 馬來西亞的漢語系佛教: 歷史的足跡、近現代再傳入與在地紮根, In *Religions and Identities in Malaysia and Indonesia: Islam, Buddhism and Chinese Belief* 馬來西亞與印尼的宗教認同: 伊斯蘭、佛教與華人信仰, edited by Lee, Fong-Mao et al., 53-121. Taipei: Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies RCHSS, Academia Studies.
- Deng, Zimei. 鄧子美. 2008. *Contemporary Humanistic Buddhist Trends* 當代人間佛教思潮. Lanzhou: Gansu Peoples Press.
- Deng, Zimei. 鄧子美. 2016. *Optional Collection: Three Views Reflecting the Monthly across the thousand worlds* 三觀映月度恆沙-自選集. Beijing: Religions Culture Press.
- He, Jianming. 何建明. 2006. "A Century of Humanistic Buddhism: Retrospectives and Reflections with a Focus on Taixu, Yinshun, and Hsing Yun." 人間佛教的百年回顧與反思: 以太虛、印順和星雲為中心, *Studies in World Religions*, no. 4: 15-24.
- Huang, Yun-Shi. 黃運喜. 2006. *A Study of the Modern Persecutions of Buddhism in China 1898-1937* 中國佛教近代法難研究1898-1937. Taipei: Fajie Publishing.
- Kan, Cheng-Tsung. 闕正宗. 2020. *Pioneer of 'Humanistic Buddhism' in Southeast Asia: Venerable Cihang's Dharma Propagation in Overseas and Taiwan 1910-1954* 南洋「人間佛教」先行者: 慈航法師海外、臺灣弘法記1910-1954. Hong Kong: Center for the Study of Humanistic Buddhism, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Lee, LM, Raymond and Susan E. Ackerman. 1997. *Sacred Modernity and Religious Transformation in Malaysia*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia.
- Song, Lidao. 宋立道. 2018. "Modernization: The Historical Background of Taixu's Humanistic Buddhism" 現代性: 太虛大師人間佛教觀的歷史背景, In *Humanistic Buddhism and the Modernization of Chinese Buddhism* 人間佛教與中國佛教現代化, edited by Yizang. 怡藏, S 419-435. Beijing: Religions Culture Press.
- Song, Lidao. 宋立道. 2008. "Modern Buddhism: The Background of Taixu's Thoughts" 現代佛教: 太虛大師的思想背景, In *Buddhism and Modernization: A Commemorative Collection for the 60th Anniversary of Master Taixu's Passing* 佛教與現代化: 太虛大師圓寂六十周年紀念文集, edited

- by Jue Qun. 覺群, 101-122. Beijing: Religions Culture Press.
- Tang, Chew Peng. 陳秋平. 2009. "The Spread and Development of Humanistic Buddhism in Malay(si)a: A Research Context Regarding Activities of Master Taixu and his Followers in Malay(si)a." 人間佛教在馬來(西)亞的傳播與發展: 以太虛大師及其學生在馬來(西)亞的活動為研究脈絡, *Studies in World Religions*, no. 3: 31-37.
- Tang, Chew Peng. 陳秋平. 2020. "Intellectual Buddhism and the Transformation of Chinese Buddhism in Malaysia." 知識佛教與馬來西亞華人佛教的轉型, *International Journal of the Studies of Humanistic Buddhism*, 10: 180-207.
- Toh, Teong Chuan. 杜忠全. 2017. "Sam Poh Tong" 三寶洞, In *Trail of the Nanyang Chinese and Legends of the Cave Temples in Ipoh of Malaysia* 南洋華蹤: 馬來西亞霹靂怡保岩洞廟宇史錄與傳說, edited by Tan Ai Boay. 陳愛梅 and Toh Teong Chuan. 杜忠全. 183-212. Beijing: China Social Science Press.
- Toh, Teong Chuan. 杜忠全. 2014. "Ven. Miao Lian" 妙蓮法師, In *Malaysian Chinese Historical Personalities* 馬來西亞華人人物志, edited by Ho Khai Leong 何啓良, 998-1001. Petaling Jaya: Centre for Chinese Studies Research, UTAR.
- Wang, Feng. 王峰. 2017. „*The Preaching of Taixu and His Disciples in Southeast Asia (1922-1947)* 太虛及其弟子在南洋的弘法1922-1947.“ *Doctoral Thesis, Department of History, Xiamen University, Xiamen, China.*
- Yu, Ying-Shi 余英時. 1994. "Radical and Conservative in the History of Modern Chinese Thoughts 中國近代思想史上的激進與保守", In *Ch'ien Mu and Chinese Culture* 錢穆與中國文化, 188-222. Shanghai: Far East Publishing.

Тох Теонг Чуан

Хуманистички или модерни будизам? Преиспитивање модернизације кинеског будизма у Малезији

Сажетак: Хуманистички будизам настао је у Кини током 20. века као облик самореформе традиционалног кинеског будизма у суочавању са новим друштвеним околностима. Кинески будизам у Малезији представља облик ширења будизма у иностранству, развијен као наставак кинеске будистичке традиције изван матице. У стварности, кинески будизам се суочавао са различитим друштвеним обрасцима у контексту кинеског и малезијског друштва. Поставља се питање: како се кинески будизам развио од традиционалног ка хуманистичком у новом, мултиетничком и мултирелигијском друштву Малезије? Ово истраживање свеобухватно разматра процес модернизације кинеског будизма и означава почетак нове фазе хуманистичког будизма у Малезији, посебно на западној обали Малакејског полуострва. Прво се анализира питање „шта је хуманистички будизам”, затим „зашто долази до трансформације ка хуманистичком будизму” у малезијском контексту. На крају, на основу постојећих запажања, систематизују се савремене форме будистичке праксе како би се утврдило „колико типова хуманистичког будизма” постоји у савременој Малезији.

Кључне речи: хуманистички будизам, модернизација кинеског будизма, кинески будизам у Малезији, плуралистичко друштво