Various Petals of the Lotus

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Various Petals of the Lotus: The Identities of the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia

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Abstract
When Indonesia's New Order regime (1965–1998) was in power, Chinese Indonesians were asked to abandon their traditional religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism, or to merge into a Buddhism made more Indonesian by means of the elimination of its Chinese traditional influences. This found support among Chinese Indonesian Buddhists who wanted to "purify" Buddhism of its "non-religious elements," and to separate it from the social stigma of "Chinese religion." However, the fall of the regime triggered the re-emergence of Chinese rituals in Buddhism. For some, the return of these rituals to Buddhism needs to be carefully examined. While they accept the celebration of Chinese traditions, they do not like them to be blended with Buddhism. This creates tensions between the religious and the cultural elements in Chinese Indonesians' Buddhism because their Buddhism has been so ingrained in Chinese culture that separating the religious from the cultural is not easy. Through ethnographic study in Surabaya, I investigate discursive practices Chinese Indonesian Buddhists use to come to terms with these tensions. I also examine how these practices shape their ethno-religious identity construction. My findings show that they use the Buddhist teaching of open-mindedness to come to terms with these tensions, and to innovate, transform and recast their religious practices.

Keywords: Buddhism, Chinese community, Chinese religion, Identity, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

The year 1998 was a watershed in Indonesia's history, which started a new chapter in its political and social life. The fall of the New Order regime in that year resulted in drastic changes. One of the most important, which Indonesians call *Reformasi* (The Reform), dealt with policies concerning the ethnic Chinese. It allowed Chinese Indonesians to regain a space in public life after more than thirty years of being marginalized and discriminated against.

Despite having been in Indonesia for such a long time and having been culturally localized, during the New Order era (1965–98) Chinese Indonesians were considered perpetual foreigners and their existence in Indonesia was often characterized by ethnic discrimination. This discrimination peaked in 1965, when the New Order Regime came to power[1] demanding cultural change. Although this situation also affected other ethnic groups, such as *Abangans*,[2] who were forced to become more religious, the Chinese were heavily impacted by the change.

After the purge of communism in 1965, the authoritarian New Order regime implemented a policy of assimilation. The Chinese in Indonesia were forced to abandon their Chinese culture, which was depicted as having destructive influences and as being inappropriate for Indonesians. They were also expected to "Indonesianize" and to blend themselves into the Indonesian nationality. This Indonesianization process also affected the domain of religion, as expressions of Chineseness, including Chinese religious and cultural traditions, were forbidden.[3]

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[1] For a detailed account of discrimination against the Chinese in Indonesia, see Jemma Purdey, *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996–1999*.
[2] *Abangans* are Javanese Muslims who practice syncretistic Islam—that is, Islam which is influenced by Hindu Javanese traditions and beliefs. For a detailed account of *Abangans*' religious practices, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*.
[3] Martin Ramstedt, "Hinduism and Buddhism," 270.

Most Chinese Indonesians embraced Chinese traditional religions such as Confucianism,[4] Daoism, and Mahāyāna Buddhism, or a blend of all of them known in Indonesia as *Sam Kauw Hwee* or *Tri Dharma*.[5] However, during the New Order era, as one way of Indonesianizing the Chinese living in Indonesia, the regime asked them to abandon Confucianism and Daoism. They were asked either to merge into the version of Buddhism that the regime tried to make more Indonesian and less Chinese by eliminating the influence of Chinese tradition, or to adopt one of the religions officially sanctioned by the State. In this way, they could become ideologically correct citizens.

Although it was spared from the outright ban, Mahāyāna Buddhism was also considered too Chinese. The opinion that Mahāyāna Buddhism was too Chinese was supported by the worship of various gods from the Chinese pantheon in this school of Buddhism.[6] There were concerted efforts from the State, as well as from *pribumi*[7] Buddhists—who form the minority in Buddhism as almost 90% of Indonesians embracing Buddhism are of Chinese descent[8]—to eliminate the influence and the growth of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This effort was also reinforced by the new theological debates in Buddhism in Indonesia, during which the New Order regime introduced what it called "modern," "proper," and "nationalist" Buddhism—namely, Buddhism which is not influenced by so-called Chinese traditional rituals, and Buddhism which is in line with state ideology.[9]

This situation put Chinese Indonesian Buddhists under pressure to conform to the new sociopolitical reality.[10] They had to separate themselves from their Chinese ancestral traditions and detach themselves from the "non-religious" and "traditional" elements in their Buddhism. This was also propelled by the idea of modernist/scripturalist Theravāda Buddhism brought to Indonesia by Indonesian Buddhist monks who underwent religious training in Sri Lanka and Thailand. The idea of modernist Theravāda Buddhism even gained currency among the new generation of Chinese Buddhists who wanted to "purify" Mahāyāna Buddhism of its "non-religious traditional" elements, and thus to separate Buddhist religious identity from the social stigma of "Chinese religion."[11]

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[4] Confucianism has been in Indonesia since long before the twentieth century. Only after the establishment of the Confucian Association, known as *Khong Kauw Hwee* (in Chinese: *Kongjiao Hui*, 孔教會), in various cities in Indonesia in around 1918 and the formation of the General Organization of *Khong Kauw Hwee* (in Chinese *Kongjiao Zhonghui*, 孔教總會) by Confucian organizations in various cities in 1923, did it become an organized religion. See, for reference, Charles A. Coppel, "'Is Confucianism a Religion?': A 1923 Debate in Java," 125–35; and Liao Jianyu 廖建裕, *Yinni Kongjiao Chutan* 印尼孔教初探 [*A Preliminary Study of Confucian Religion in Indonesia*].

[5] *Sam Kauw Hwee* (in Chinese: *Sanjiao Hui*, 三教會), also known as *Tri Dharma*, literally means "the Association of Three Religions." For further discussion on the history and development of *Sam Kauw Hwee* see Leo Suryadinata, *The Culture of Chinese Minority in Indonesia*.

[6] See Tan Chee Beng, "The Study of Chinese Religions in Southeast Asia: Some Views," 139–65, for an anthropological account of the adoption of the concept of multiple deities in Chinese Buddhism.

[7] *Pribumi* refers to the indigenous ethnic group in Indonesia. *Non-pribumi* refers to the non-indigenous group, but it is used exclusively to refer to the Chinese. However, the use of this term is not encouraged anymore, especially since President Habibie issued Presidential Decree No. 26/1998 on September 16, 1998, which abolished the terms *pribumi* and *non-pribumi*. The new citizenship law, which was issued on August 1, 2006, defines indigenous Indonesians as people who are born Indonesians, and never have other citizenships.

[8] Aris Ananta, Evi N. Arifin and Kusnadi Bakhtiar, "Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia and the Riau Archipelago: A Demographic Analysis," 30.

[9] For further reference see Bunki Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: in Memory of Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahasthavira," 53–72; Martin Ramstedt, "Hinduism and Buddhism," 267–83; and Karel Steenbrink, "Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia," 1–34.

[10] Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country. Out of 237,641,326 people, 1,703,254 or 0.72% are Buddhists. Based on the latest population census (2010), the largest concentration of Buddhists is in the province of Kepulauan Riau (6.65%), followed by West Kalimantan (5.41%) and Bangka Belitung (3.25%). The percentage of Buddhists in East Java province is only 0.16% of the total population of East Java (http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321, accessed on September 9, 2018). Yet, the number of Buddhists living in Surabaya—the capital of East Java province and the second largest city in Indonesia, where the fieldwork for this project was conducted—is quite high: 31,166, which constitutes more than half of the Buddhist population in the province—namely, 60,760 people (http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=3578000000, accessed on September 9, 2018).

[11] Buddhism's social stigma as a Chinese religion can be seen from Buddhist temples, known as *vihara* in Indonesia. Mosques and churches in Indonesia can be discerned from their architecture and facades. However, unlike mosques and churches, with some exceptions—especially temples which have a large number of non-Chinese devotees and old Chinese temples—most Buddhist

However, the fall of the regime in 1998 brought winds of change. One scholar noted that "Chinese Indonesians are no longer forced to be assimilated; they are able to retain their ethnic culture and identity."[12] Chinese tradition and culture got a new lease of life. Rituals and practices of Chinese traditions started to re-emerge—especially in the religious beliefs traditionally associated with the Chinese, such as Buddhism, Daosim, and Confucianism. Chinese Buddhism started to develop again.[13] For some modernist and scripturalist Chinese Indonesian Buddhists, the return of Chinese traditions and rituals to Buddhism needs to be examined carefully. While they do not reject Chinese traditions and rituals and can accept the celebration of Chinese traditions, they do not want to blend Buddhism with Chinese traditions. There are tensions between religious and Chinese cultural elements in the belief of the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia as the Buddhism most of the Chinese in Indonesia embrace has been so ingrained in Chinese culture that separating the religious from the cultural is not easy. How do the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia negotiate these tensions? How do they separate the religious from the cultural? These are the issues I explore in this paper. In so doing, and by referring to fieldwork conducted in Surabaya, I investigate the practices Chinese Indonesian Buddhists use in coming to terms with these tensions. I also examine how these practices shape the way they construct their ethno-religious identity.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF RELIGION AND ETHNICITY

My investigation into the Chinese Indonesian Buddhists in Surabaya is informed by Weberian sociological theory of religion. According to Weber, the development of religion shows that it undergoes a rationalization process whereby it moves away from a magical orientation to more rationalized religious practices.[14] This means that it modernizes and detaches itself from the magical content. The rationalization of religion also shows that religion is systematized to make it more systematic and coherent. In other words, there are two kinds of religious rationalization: one that emphasizes modernization and another that emphasizes coherence.

In his discussion on religion, Weber also emphasizes the relationship between religion and society. Through the example of the role that Protestant ethics played in the development of capitalism, he explains that religion may lead to social change and shape society and culture. However, because of the dialectical relation between religion on the one hand and society and culture on the other, society and culture may also generate specific religious beliefs. This, according to Weber, may produce tensions between religion and political institutions.[15] These tensions, I believe, could occur as a result of the differences between what political institutions prescribe and what religious organizations teach. They may put pressure on an ethno-religious group to conform to the sociopolitical reality.

In conforming to sociopolitical reality, an ethno-religious group could resort to accommodation and adaptation. In so doing, this group may invent a tradition of religious practices. Invented tradition is defined as:

> a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which

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temples were originally profane commercial buildings or houses and were only later converted into temples. For this reason, they do not resemble Buddhist temples from the outside. The indicators that they are Buddhist temples are usually small Buddhist icons such as stupas. There are even temples that do not display outward signs that they are Buddhist temples, except in their names. This low-profile image gives some indication of the challenges that Buddhism—a state-sanctioned religion—faces, despite the Indonesian constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. However, the administration that replaced the New Order brought openness. New Buddhist temples built after the fall of the New Order regime display that they are Buddhist temples through their architectural designs.

[12] Eddie Lembong, "Indonesian Government Policies and the Ethnic Chinese: Some Recent Development," 55.

[13] Leo Suryadinata, "Chinese Indonesians in an Era of Globalization: Some Major Characteristics," 10.

[14] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 61.

[15] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 223.

> automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.[16]

Tradition is invented as an attempt to cope with changes that happen. It is a response to the changes, and at the same time it structures some parts of social life as unchanging or seemingly stable.

My study is also informed by Durkheim's functionalist theory of religion, which focuses on the capacity of religion to socially organize groups of individuals. He argues that religious belief and practice can create and strengthen communal bonds among members of the same faith. He says,

> Religious beliefs proper are always shared by a definite group that professes them and that practices the corresponding rites. Not only are they individually accepted by all members of that group, but they also belong to the group and unify it. The individuals who comprise the group feel joined to one another by the fact of common faith.[17]

These communal bonds are created and strengthened through religious rites and practices transmitting cultural values and tradition. Thus, religious beliefs, practices, and rituals can bind individuals together and provide a social context for the maintenance of ethnic traditions, norms, and values. This maintenance could contribute to the preservation and development of ethnic identity. However, the preservation and development of identity through religious beliefs and practices creates a process through which boundaries appear reflecting differences and interests among members of ethno-religious group. These boundaries are elastic as they are, according to Roosens, constituted by selected cultural features which members of the group ascribe to themselves and consider relevant.[18]

Grounding my argument in the conceptual framework of religion and ethnicity, I try to delineate the discursive practices of the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia in negotiating and constructing their ethno-religious identity. First of all, I explain how Buddhism was labeled as a "Chinese religion." Subsequently, I elucidate how it was Indonesianized and how the Chinese Buddhists responded to the process of Indonesianization. Finally, I examine the situation Buddhism faced after the fall of the New Order regime.

THE ORIGIN OF "CHINESE RELIGION"

Historical records show that Buddhism has been in Indonesia for centuries. The fall of the last Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in Java in the fifteenth century and the spread of Islam changed the religious landscape in the archipelago and ushered in the demise of Buddhism.[19] Nevertheless, Hindu-Buddhist influence still remains, at least in the form of traditional belief and rituals, known as *kejawen* (Javanese mysticism). An anthropologist, Niels Mulder, writes that many aspects of Javanese mysticism inform Javanese "ethics, customs, and style" and "are generally thought to hark back to the Hindu-Buddhist period of Javanese history."[20] Another scholar, Robert W. Hefner, writes that Hindu-Buddhist traditions still survive even as Java becomes more Islamic.[21]

Buddhism started to resurface in the seventeenth century, although it was mixed with Daoism and Confucianism as a result of the influx of Chinese immigrants into Indonesia. They brought their beliefs and established places of worship. The first Chinese Buddhist temple, named Kim Tek Ie (in Chinese: Jin De Yuan 金德院) and known today as Dharma Bhakti Vihara, was built in 1650 in the Glodok area of Jakarta.[22] From that time, Buddhism—mixed with Chinese traditional beliefs—grew in tandem with the Chinese

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[16] Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.
[17] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 41.
[18] Eugene E. Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*, 12.
[19] Gina L. Barnes, "An Introduction to Buddhist Archaeology," 171.
[20] Niels Mulders, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia*, 16.
[21] Robert W. Hefner, "Ritual and Cultural Reproduction in Non-Islamic Java," 666.
[22] Claudine Salmon and Denys Lombard, *Klenteng-Klenteng dan Masyarakat Tionghoa di Jakarta* [*Chinese Temples and Chinese Society in Jakarta*], 18.

community in Indonesia. In order to cater to the spiritual needs of the Chinese, more Chinese Buddhist temples were built. The temples became not only the center of religious life, but the center of Chinese cultural life as well. Through rituals and practices, such as wedding rituals, mourning customs, funeral ceremonies, and the observation of Chinese Buddhist holidays, following Durkheim's argument that religious belief and practice can create and strengthen communal bonds among members of the same faith,[23] I contend that the temples preserved Chinese ethnic culture and identity. In so doing, they maintained a sense of ethnicity among the Chinese community. In this way, Buddhism earned the label of "Chinese religion."

The arrival of Dutch theosophists in colonial Indonesia in the early twentieth century, such as Josias van Dienst and E.E. Powers, contributed to the revival of interest in Buddhism. They created the Theosophical Society, an avenue for exploring esoteric Eastern mysticism. This society became so popular that in a short time it attracted many new members from a variety of ethnic groups, like the Dutch and the Chinese, as well as local native elites. It also established branches in many parts of Java and other islands.[24] The popularity of the theosophical movement in attracting the Javanese elites and the Chinese was due to its leaning on Eastern esotericism. For the Javanese elites, Eastern esotericism referred to the Saivite and Buddhist philosophy of old Java. This philosophy also attracted many educated Dutch colonial administrators.[25] For the Chinese, it was related to Chinese traditional beliefs. In the congress held on April 1–2, 1923, the Theosophical society encouraged the Chinese to return to the teachings of their ancestors—"*kembali ke ajaran-ajaran leluhur mereka*."[26] An increasing number of wealthy Chinese joined the Theosophical Society, and many became important members because they supported the Society financially. Some Chinese theosophists who had a deep interest in Buddhism began to revive it, although it was still mixed with Daoism and Confucianism. One of them was Kwee Tek Hoay (in Chinese: Guo Dehuai 郭德懷), who published the bulletin *Moestika Dharma* (*The Jewel of Dharma*) in 1931, and *Sam Kauw Gwat Po* (in Chinese *San Jiao Yuebao* 三教月報, *Sam Kauw Monthly*) in 1933. Tan Khoen Swie (in Chinese: Chen Kunru 陳坤瑞) published *Soeara Sam Kauw Hwee* (*Voice of Sam Kauw Hwee*) in 1934. These publications, which used the term *Sam Kauw*, clearly emphasized the blending of the three teachings, namely Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.

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[23] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 41.

[24] Iskandar Nugraha, *Mengikis Batas Timur dan Barat: Gerakan Theosofi dan Nasionalisme Indonesia* [*Eradicating the Boundaries between the East and the West: Theosophical Movement and Nationalism in Indonesia*], 19.

[25] Nancy Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java*, 27–28.

[26] Iskandar Nugraha, *Mengikis Batas Timur dan Barat: Gerakan Theosofi dan Nasionalisme Indonesia* [*Eradicating the Boundaries between the East and the West: Theosophical Movement and Nationalism in Indonesia*], 32.

Fig. 1. Cover page of Moestika Dharma

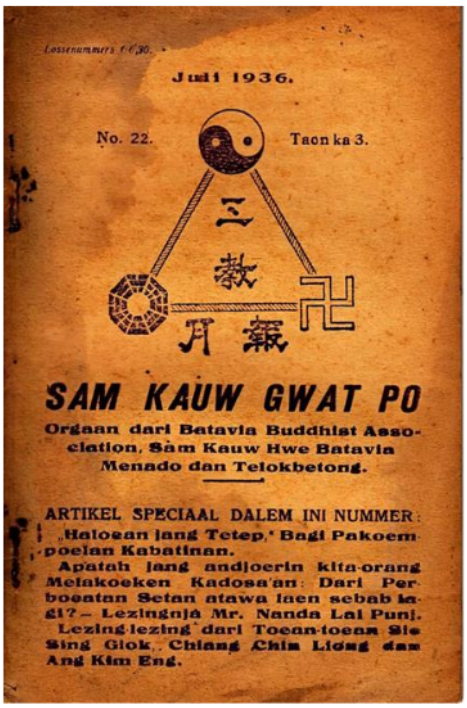

Fig. 2. Cover page of Sam Kauw Gwat Po

In the mid-twentieth century, the Theosophical Society started to lose its luster. It became the target of ideological attacks from the indigenous community, Muslims, and Christians alike. They considered theosophy an example of occultism, which was a syncretistic belief in various religions, and hence unsuitable for Muslims and Christians. However, Buddhism still grew due to the relentless efforts of some prominent Buddhist monks—among others, Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita, who was of Chinese descent and whose birth name was Tee Boan An (in Chinese: Zheng Man'an 鄭滿安) and Bhante Girirakkhito, the son of a Balinese royal family, whose birth name was Ida Bagus Giri—in spreading the Dharma in Indonesia.[27] There were more and more people interested in and converting to Buddhism.

Although there were natives who embraced Buddhism, "the vast majority of the Buddhists are indeed ethnic Chinese."[28] This affected the nature of rituals and practices in Buddhism; that is to say, they were influenced by Chinese traditions. Traditions such as venerating ancestors and observing *Qingming Jie*[29] became part of Buddhist practice. Moreover, Chinese Buddhist deities were also found in many temples. This caused a problem for Buddhism in Indonesia. It was not only a minority religion, but also associated with the Chinese—an ethnic minority—and hence often labeled as Chinese religion. Being labeled as Chinese religion might not have been a problem during the colonial era because the Dutch colonial administration made the Chinese an ethnic minority on whose support the colonial administration relied.[30] However, after independence, the Chinese were considered a problem because they were seen as

[27] For a detailed account of Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita and Bhante Girirakkhito, see Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* [*Spreading the Seed of Dharma in the Archipelago: A Short Biography of Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita*] (Bandung: Yayasan Penerbit Karaniya, 1995).

[28] Leo Suryadinata, Evi N. Arifin and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*, 124.

[29] *Qingming Jie* (清明節), also known as Tomb-Sweeping Day, is the time when people of Chinese descent visit the graves of their departed ones and make ritual offerings.

[30] Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, 321.

allies of the colonialists, although only a handful of them supported colonial rule, and many joined the Indonesian nationalist movement. In this political environment, being associated with the Chinese was definitely bad for Buddhism. Besides, in order to survive and grow in postcolonial Indonesia, Buddhism had to be able to attract other ethnic groups. In facing this problem, Buddhists in postcolonial Indonesia realized that they had to dissociate the religion from the label of Chinese religion due to "its 'overly' Chinese cultural form,"[31] and promote it as "an autochthonous religion and not a foreign or alien import."[32] In so doing, they could turn Buddhism into a religion that transcended ethnic boundaries in Indonesia.

DOCTRINAL INTERVENTION

Because of nationalist sentiment after Indonesian independence was proclaimed, the Buddhists in Indonesia tried to reconfigure their religion into a form of Buddhism that could carry nationalist content. In independent Indonesia, this meant a more Indonesian and less Chinese Buddhism—namely, Buddhism with distinct Indonesian characteristics.[33] However, although there were indigenous Buddhists, Indonesianizing Buddhism was not easy because the majority of the Buddhists were Chinese, and Chinese culture had deeply penetrated the version of Buddhism in Indonesia. Even the existence of nationalist sentiment and the political will of Indonesianizing Buddhism were not able to transform Buddhism into so-called Indonesianized Buddhism. As a result, the Indonesianization of Buddhism was minimal. But the situation changed after the abortive Communist coup and the army counter-coup in 1965, when the New Order regime came to power.

Anti-Chinese feeling, spurred by the regime's belief that the coup was backed by China and that the Chinese in Indonesia were sympathetic to the Communist Party of Indonesia, resulted in the eradication of Chinese cultural influence in Indonesian society at large, and particularly in Buddhism. The New Order regime issued several laws as the legal basis for this eradication—among others, the ban on the Chinese language and the regulation that restricted the practice of Chinese religiosity and customs. The presence of non-Chinese Buddhists also encouraged Buddhist clergy to separate the religion from the social stigma of "Chinese religion." This was one reason why, in its congress in May 1970, *Perhimpunan Buddhis Indonesia* (the Indonesian Buddhists Association) issued a resolution stating that "Indonesia Buddhism in Indonesia should have more Indonesian characteristics, not Chinese ones."[34] The effort of separating Buddhism from the social stigma of Chinese religion was reinforced by the implementation of Presidential Instruction No. 14, issued on December 6, 1967, on the restriction of Chinese religions, beliefs, and traditional customs.[35] This Presidential Instruction became the law that instructed *klenteng* (Indonesian term for Chinese temple in general) to be converted to *vihara* (Buddhist temple) and prohibited the building of new Chinese temples.[36] Experiencing the conversion of Chinese temples into Buddhist ones, a temple caretaker lamented, "We had to convert our temple into *vihara*. If not, we would be in trouble. … This was the most difficult moment for us. We had to change our place of worship as if it was the place of abomination. It did pain us."[37] This law also affected pure Buddhist *viharas*. Because they were perceived as being associated with Chinese religion, Buddhist places of worship faced problems. In an interview with *Tempo* magazine, Oka Diputhera, the chair of the Information and Education Division of WALUBI (*Perwalian Umat Buddha*

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[31] Martin Ramstedt, "Hinduism and Buddhism," 270.
[32] Iem Brown, "The Revival of Buddhism in Modern Indonesia," 53.
[33] For further discussion on Indonesian Buddhism see Karel Steenbrink, "Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia."
[34] Laurence-Kantipalo Mills, *A Record of Journeys in Indonesia: for the Ordination of Five Bhikkhus at the Great Stupa of Borobudur by Phra Sāsana Sobhana from the 6th of May to the 13th May 2513*, 71.
[35] This Presidential Instruction was annulled by Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000.
[36] Because of this law, many Chinese temples changed their Chinese names into Sanskrit Buddhist or Indonesian names. For example, Kim Tek Ie (in Chinese: Jin De Yuan, 金德院) in Jakarta became Dharma Bhakti Vihara, Hok An Kiong (Fu An Gong, 福安宫) in Surabaya became Sukhaloka Vihara, and Liong Tjwan Bio (Long Quan Miao, 龍泉廟) in Probolinggo became Sumber Naga Vihara, the Indonesian translation of the temple's Chinese name.
[37] Interview, March 1, 2015

Indonesia, or The Indonesian Buddhist Council), said that repairs of existing Buddhist temples required a special permit, which was often difficult to get.[38]

Although discriminatory laws were issued, the government did not declare that Chinese religions were illegal because such a declaration was against the Indonesian state ideology that guaranteed freedom of religion. Therefore, it resorted to a gradual eradication of Chinese cultural influence by the classification of all Chinese traditional religions as Buddhism. In a way, it promoted Buddhism. However, the version of Buddhism it wanted was "modern," "proper," and "nationalist" Buddhism.

The New Order's idea of modernist religion was characterized by scripturalism—that is, emphasis on the teaching in the scriptures. The regime opined that Buddhism should encourage its adherents to go back to their holy books and detach themselves from Chinese ritual elements, as these elements were actually cultural, and, more often than not, had no relation to the religion itself.[39] In so doing, the regime borrowed the authority of holy scriptures to justify its policy—an act that Wimbush describes as scripturalization.[40] Based on this fact, I argue that with this modernist idea in mind, as well as the desire to make Buddhism "proper" and "Indonesian," the regime wanted the popular version of Buddhism to transform itself in order to fit the Buddhist space it had defined. The religious practices of the Buddhists were considered to be Chinese ritualism. Therefore, it also asked them to "rehabilitate" their rituals so that the rituals were in line with Buddha Gautama's teaching. The Chinese Buddhists had to return to the "true" Dharma—that is, the Buddha's teaching—and not the spirit of worship, as practiced by many Chinese in Chinese temples. In other words, the regime tried to rationalize popular Buddhism by urging the Buddhists to hold more rationalized religious practices.

This doctrinal intervention resulted in the restriction of Chinese cultural influence. Chinese traditional holidays, which were often celebrated as ethno-religious holidays in many Chinese Buddhist temples, were discouraged as they were seen as non-Buddhist celebrations, although they were not totally banned. The restriction of Chinese cultural influence was also spurred by a circular of the Directorate General for Press and Graphics (No. 02/SE/Ditjen-PPGK/1988) that prohibited any publications and printings in Chinese. This posed a problem for Buddhist temples which used sūtras in Chinese. They could not print new books of sūtras, and importing them was not possible either. While the sūtras could be chanted in Chinese, the Sanskrit version was encouraged. Describing this situation, an elder in a Buddhist temple said, "We started using Sanskrit sūtras when the New Order regime banned Chinese language and culture. … Chanting in Chinese was not totally forbidden, but you know …. when the government said that it was recommended, it was not just a recommendation. It was an order. Then we used both Chinese and Sanskrit sūtras. However, Sanskrit sūtras were chanted in our Sunday school."[41]

Another kind of doctrinal intervention could be seen in the New Order regime's long war with communism. The regime used communism as a common enemy of the people and anything associated with that enemy was repressed. Because China was associated with communism, the Chinese had to cut their ties with China and Chinese culture in order not to be regarded as a communist—an enemy of the State. Because communism was also seen as atheism, they were also expected to embrace a religion, which the New Order regime defined based on Islam's conception of religion—that is, believing in God, besides having prophets and a holy book.

The position of the belief in God in the Indonesian political landscape is very central, as seen in the first principle of Pancasila, Indonesia's state ideology, which is, *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*, the belief in

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[38] "Wawancara Oka Diputhera."

[39] A circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1978 (No. 477/74054/1978) reminds the public of the restriction on Chinese religions, beliefs, and customs, as stated in Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967. A circular issued by the Directorate General of Hinduism and Buddhism, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in January 1993 (No. H/BA.00/29/1/1993) instructs Buddhists in Indonesia not to celebrate Chinese traditional celebrations and Chinese New Year in Buddhist temples on the grounds that they are not Buddhist celebrations. Even a national-level Buddhist organization, WALUBI (*Perwalian Umat Buddha Indonesia*, The Indonesian Buddhist council), issued a circular in the same month, January 1993, supporting the circular of the Directorate General of Hinduism and Buddhism. It reiterated that Chinese New Year was not related to Buddhism. Hence, it could not be celebrated in Buddhist temples.

[40] See Vincent L. Wimbush, "It's Scripturalization, Colleagues!," 193–200.

[41] Interview, March 1, 2015.

one supreme God.[42] This principle is a product for accommodating both the Muslims who wanted an Islamic state (by emphasizing the importance of religion) and those who wanted a secular state. Thus, the word *Tuhan*, a neutral word for God (that is, a word that does not refer to the god of any specific religion), and not Allah, which specifically refers to Islam, is used. This principle was meant to be inclusive—that is, a principle that transcended religious differences in the nation. However, this inclusivity turned out to be exclusive. Based on this principle, the State only recognized a monotheistic religion. As a result, it excluded non-theistic and polytheistic religions. This situation created a problem for Buddhism, as Buddhism is non-theistic—namely, the existence of God is not clearly acknowledged.[43] Surely, the belief in one Supreme God, as the personification of a divine being, was not in line with Buddhist teachings, but in order to be politically respected Buddhism had to conform to the principle of the belief in one supreme God.

Entangled in this doctrinal intervention, the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia had to reposition their religion. They had to respond to the new situation they faced. Social forces and the search for meaning propelled them to make religious and ethnic adaptations.

POLITICAL RITUALS

Ritual is closely related to identity as the former can function as the expression of the latter. Ritual can provide a space in which individuals of various backgrounds demonstrate their attachment to the ritual in which they participate. This attachment can produce a sense of belonging among the participants and ritual can draw attention to the shared culture that binds them into an "imagined community."[44] In this way, ritual is essential in fostering identity, as it is "the means by which individuals are brought together as a collective group."[45] It functions to "strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member."[46]

As Buddhism in Indonesia was predominantly Chinese and was also rooted in Chinese culture, Chinese traditional holidays were celebrated as ethno-religious holidays. The celebration of those holidays could thus strengthen Sino-Buddhist identity. However, Sino-Buddhist identity was seen as a threat to the process of nation-building and the creation of Indonesian identity. Thus, in order to conform to the new sociopolitical landscape, adaptation was needed. The Buddhist teaching of impermanence was often used as religious justification. Those who adapted their religious rituals believed that the notion of impermanence—that is, "no element of physical matter or any concept remain unchanged"[47]—gave them the authority[48] to do so. As a *Romo Pandito*[49] in a Buddhayāna temple said: "It is stated in Buddhist scripture that nothing is permanent. So, making some adjustments as long as the changes are still in line with Buddhist teachings is definitely not a big deal."[50]

An example of adaptation is the appropriation of Chinese traditional celebrations as Buddhist celebrations. Many Chinese traditional celebrations fall on the first or the fifteenth day of a month of the lunar calendar. This calendrical cycle fits with the calendrical cycle of the Buddhist day of uposatha (a

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[42] The Indonesian state ideology, *Pancasila*, consists of five principles—namely, (1) Belief in one supreme God, (2) Just and civilized humanity, (3) The unity of Indonesia, (4) Democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultation, and (5) Social justice for all Indonesians. The fact that the first principle is the belief in one God implies the importance of this belief in Indonesian social and political structures. The importance of this belief is legally supported by Presidential Decree No. 1/PNPS of 1965, issued on January 27, 1965, which stipulates that it is against the law to persuade people not to believe in any religion which is based on the belief in one supreme God.

[43] Shangharakshita. *A Survey of Buddhism: Its Doctrine and Methods through the Ages*, 3.

[44] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 32.

[45] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions*, 25.

[46] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 36.

[47] Carol S. Anderson, "Anitya (Impermanence)," 23

[48] For further discussion on how scriptures function as the source of authoritative power, see Vincent L. Wimbush, "It's Scripturalization, Colleagues!," 193–200.

[49] *Romo Pandito* is a Javanese honorific term for addressing a lay person who is appointed as an "elder" in a Buddhist temple. *Romo Pandita* usually leads the liturgy in a temple, in the absence of a monk

[50] Interview, December 10, 2014.

Buddhist day of observance). Thus, these Chinese traditional celebrations were now celebrated as uposatha days. They were not celebrated as just Chinese traditional rituals per se. In other words, ethno-religious celebrations were changed into religious celebrations.

Accommodation was also made in the liturgy. Although the New Order outlawed the use of the Chinese language and the public display of Chinese culture, Buddhism provided the Chinese with a legitimate space for culturally Chinese rituals and practices. The liturgy was allowed to be conducted in Chinese. Sūtras could be chanted in Chinese. However, in order to accommodate the political situation, Sanskrit sūtras were introduced and used in the liturgy. And to make the liturgy more "Indonesian," Indonesian translations were also provided. Furthermore, the Indonesian translation was also read after the Sanskrit sūtras were chanted. In Theravāda temples, the Pāli suttas were chanted, followed by their Indonesian translation.

In the process of adaptation, Chinese Buddhists resisted pressure to "nationalize" Buddhism as well as accommodating it. In my opinion, the preservation of Chinese traditional celebrations and the use of Chinese served as a strategy of resistance that Chinese Buddhists used to express their ethnic identity. However, they had to make concessions because the process of "nationalization" would make Buddhism more universal and less of an ethnic religion by emphasizing the religious aspects of the celebration—that is, uposatha. The emphasis on uposatha could create a sense of Buddhist identity, yet, at the same time, the ethnic nuances of the celebration were also preserved. In order to highlight the "nationalist" content of Buddhism practiced by the Chinese, the Indonesian language, together with other languages important in Buddhism such as Chinese and Sanskrit, was also used. Here, one can see the interplay between accommodation and resistance. Because being more "universal" actually means being more "Indonesian" and devoid of Chineseness, the Chinese felt the need to find the balance between accommodation—that is, expressing their Indonesianness—and resistance—that is, maintaining their Chineseness.

The appropriation of Chinese celebration as a Buddhist tradition and the accommodation in liturgy show that the Buddhists invented a tradition in the form of rituals. These rituals, as "invented" traditions,[51] were political because they could "construct, display, and promote … political interests" of a certain group.[52] The enactment of political rituals functions as a tool for identity expression when tensions arise due to a changing social and political climate.

INTERPRETING GODHEAD

As well as being visible in rituals and practices, doctrinal intervention can also be seen in Buddhist theology.[53] Buddhism became the target of criticism because of its non-theistic doctrine. The State regarded Buddhism as either standing in passive violation of or against *Pancasila*, the Indonesian state ideology. The theological debate over whether or not Buddhism acknowledged the existence of God was not important in Indonesia before independence. However, the changing political landscape compelled Buddhists to adapt Buddhist doctrine in order to survive in Indonesia. It is with the interest of surviving in Indonesia that Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita popularized the term Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha (to refer to a concept of God in Buddhism),[54] found in the old Javanese text *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, a Buddhist catechism written by an unknown author in the era of Mpu Sendok, a king of Kadiri in the eighth or ninth century, nowadays known as Kediri, a city in East Java.[55]

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[51] Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

[52] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions*, 128.

[53] While the word "theology" may not fit in with the nature of Buddhism because it is portrayed as a religion without God, a number of scholars use the word to refer to the study of Buddhism as a religion—hence the term "Buddhist theology." See, for example, Roger Jackson and John Makransky, ed., *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars* (Cornwall: Curzon, 2000), and Kieko Obuse, "Finding God in Buddhism: A New Trend in Contemporary Buddhist Approaches to Islam" *Numen* 62, no. 4 (2015): 408–430.

[54] For a reference on how Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita popularized this term, see Iem Brown, "Contemporary Indonesian Buddhism and Monotheism," 108–17.

[55] The book *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*, written in Old Javanese, has been translated into several languages. The first translation into a western language was translated by J. Kats and published in 1910. The Indonesian version was translated by I Gusti Sugriwa

Ādi-Buddha is "the primordial Buddha," which is "found in the late Mahāyāna and Tibetan traditions of tantric Buddhism."[56] The primordial Buddha, also known as the original Buddha, or the eternal Buddha, is mentioned in the later part of the Lotus Sūtra as "the cosmic Buddha pervading everywhere, whose form is all things, whose voice is all sounds, and whose mind is all thoughts."[57] Ādi-Buddha is the Buddha without beginning. Hence, it is different from Siddharta Gautama, the historical Buddha. Ādi-Buddha is the creator of everything. However, it is different from the Christian and Islamic understanding of God as the Creator, who is personified as a divine being. Ādi-Buddha is the embodiment of *sūnyatā*, nothingness.

With the concept of Ādi-Buddha as such in mind, as well as the idea of making a political accommodation, Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita argued that Indonesian Buddhism had a tradition which was different from other forms of Buddhism around the world—that is, Indonesian Buddhism worshipped a Godhead, *Tuhan yang Maha Esa*. He founded Buddhayāna, an ecumenical school of Indonesian Buddhism, incorporating three major schools of Buddhism found in Indonesia: Mahāyāna, Tantrayāna, and Theravāda.[58] His personal experience may also have contributed to his effort to establish Buddhayāna.

> He [Bhante Ashin Jinarakkitha] was, … , a monk of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna. He studied the thoughts of original Buddhism based on the academic inquiry as a Theosophist, while growing up in the circumstance of syncretistic Chinese Buddhism. These experiences caused him to have the idea that there is no "pure" Buddhism and that it is most important to be a disciple of Buddha.[59]

Although Ādi-Buddha can be found in Mahāyāna and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, the concept of Ādi-Buddha is not the focus of the philosophical teaching of those schools. However, the concept of Shang Hyang Ādi-Buddha was central to the teaching of Buddhayāna. Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita's idea of Ādi-Buddha was well supported by other Buddhist monks and leaders. The Indonesian Buddhist Association published a booklet, *Ketuhanan dalam Agama Buddha* (*The Deity in Buddhism*), written by Dhammaviriya in 1965, which mentioned three tenets of Indonesian Buddhism: believing in one supreme God, Ādi-Buddha; having prophets such as Buddha Gautama and other Bodhisattvas; and having holy books, including the *Tipitaka*, *Dhammapada*, and *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan*. Obviously, one can see how Buddhism is thereby adapted for the Islamic context, in which the State defines religion.

The concept of Ādi-Buddha gained greater importance for Buddhism in Indonesia after 1965, when the State forbade communism and atheism and promoted monotheism. The State and other religious groups accused Buddhism of being equal to atheism, and hence having communist characteristics. Many Buddhist leaders countered this accusation. They said that Buddhism was a religion based on the belief in one supreme God, namely Ādi-Buddha, and that it was rooted in ancient Indonesia. Under these political conditions, therefore, the concept of Ādi-Buddha gained a prominent position in Indonesian Buddhist theology.

Not all schools of Buddhism in Indonesia accepted the concept of Ādi-Buddha. The reformist Theravāda rejected the idea of God as personified in Ādi-Buddha, because this school believed that in Buddhism there was no God as a divine being. Criticizing Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita's concept of Ādi-Buddha, Bhante Naradha Thera, a Sri Lankan Theravādin monk who once visited Indonesia, sent a letter to Bhante Ashin Jinarakkhita's English translator in which he wrote that there was no God in Buddhism.[60] Another monk from Thailand, who was invited for the ordination of five Indonesian Buddhist monks in

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and published by a Denpasar-based publisher, Pustaka Balimas in 1956. A team from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs reprinted the book in 1973.

[56] Damien Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, 5.

[57] Jacqualine I. Stone, "Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra)," 473.

[58] For a detailed discussion on Buddhayāna, see Heinz Bechert, "The Buddhayāna of Indonesia: A Syncretistic Form of Theravāda," 10–21.

[59] Bunki Kimura, "Present Situation of Indonesian Buddhism: in Memory of Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita Mahāsthavira," 59–60.

[60] Edij Juangari, *Menabur Benih Dharma di Nusantara: Riwayat Singkat Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita* [*Spreading the Seed of Dharma in the Archipelago: A Short Biography of Bikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita*], 145.

1970, also questioned the concept of Ādi-Buddha. He questioned whether this concept was "a wise compromise."[61] However, the Indonesian Theravādins understood the importance of God in the Indonesian social and political landscape. They also stressed that the Buddhists in Indonesia believed in God[62] (Girirakkhito 1968). Based on the Pāli canon of *Khuddaka Nikaya*, *Udana VIII* (*Nibbana Sutta*) describing that Buddha taught a group of monks about "the absolute," which has the characteristics of *ajata* (unborn), *abhuta* (unoriginated), *akata* (uncreated), and *asankatha* (unconditioned), the Indonesian Theravādins interpreted the absolute as the Supreme God in Buddhism.[63]

Despite the differences in the idea of God, Indonesian Buddhists' (both Chinese and non-Chinese) attempt to conform to the state ideology led to the invention of an Indonesian tradition of Buddhism incorporating the concept of a supreme God. Yet this tradition was not totally new because it is derived from the past. Invented traditions usually have continuity with the past,[64] and they are invented to cope with new conditions and situations.[65] Hobsbawm and Ranger's idea regarding the invention of tradition explains very well how Indonesian Buddhists invented the concept of God by reinterpreting an old idea—that is, giving it a new meaning suitable for the conditions they faced. The concept of God they invented is found in "their historic past"—specifically, in the notion of Ādi-Buddha—which was given a new meaning and reinterpreted as "God."

POST-NEW ORDER BUDDHISM

During the New Order era, the eradication of Chinese cultural influences on Buddhism and the Indonesianization of Buddhism were reinforced by the arrival in Indonesia of Theravāda Buddhism, which was brought by Buddhist monks who had been sent to Sri Lanka and Thailand to undergo religious training.[66] In 1970, some of them established a movement which aimed at reforming Buddhism to return to the original Pāli teachings as written in the Theravāda canon of the Tipitaka, and emphasizing the philosophical teachings of Buddha instead of the performance of rituals. It found support in the regime's policy on religious modernization of Buddhism and among the Chinese who wanted to purify Buddhism. As a result, the Theravāda tradition dominated Indonesian Buddhist society, both Chinese and non-Chinese. However, the fall of the regime brought winds of change.

The downfall of Suharto and the change of national leadership in 1998 opened a new chapter in the life of the Chinese Indonesians. Since then, they have regained a place in public life. Chinese cultural celebrations have got a new lease of life in Indonesia. The new situation, which shows openness to Chinese culture, has also influenced the religious life of the Chinese community. Chinese Christians and Muslims have started to show interest in their ethnicity's traditional celebrations. For example, Chinese New Year is also celebrated in some churches and mosques where there are a substantial number of Chinese in the congregation. Chinese Buddhists started celebrating Chinese traditions openly, as well as practicing the rituals of Chinese traditional religion in their Buddhism. Since the use of Chinese language in public is now

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[61] Laurence-Kantipalo Mills, *A Record of Journeys in Indonesia: for the Ordination of Five Bhikkhus at the Great Stupa of Borobudur by Phra Sāsana Sobhana from the 6th of May to the 13th May 2513*, 5.

[62] Girirakkhito, "Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa Sendi Mutlak dalam Agama Buddha [Belief in One Supreme God, the Absolute basis in Buddhism]" (unpublished manuscript, presented in *Course for Teachers of Buddhism*, organized by Yayasana Buddhayana in Malang in 1968).

[63] Despite the political openness after the fall of the authoritarian regime, the Theravādins in Indonesia still adhere to the belief in God. However, they insist that the Buddhist concept of God is different from the concept of God Indonesians are familiar with—that is, the concept derived from the Christian and Islamic understanding of God, where God is described as a personified divine being and the creator of the world and human beings.

[64] Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

[65] Ibid., 8.

[66] A number of studies on Buddhism attribute the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia to the missionary work of the Theravāda Buddhist monks. The first few Buddhist monks in modern Indonesia were ordained according to Theravāda tradition. The Theravāda missionary work and ordination may be a factor behind the tendency in Buddhism in Indonesia to send monks to a Theravāda school for religious training. For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Yoneo Ishii, "Modern Buddhism in Indonesia," 108–15.

permitted, many Chinese Buddhist temples have started to chant sūtras in Chinese. However, modernist and scripturalist Theravādins have questioned these practices. While they did not reject Chinese traditions and rituals, and could accept the chanting of Chinese sūtras in Chinese Buddhist temples and the celebration of Chinese traditions, they did not want to blend Buddhism as a religion with Chinese traditional religions and rituals as the Chinese who embraced other religions did. This created a conflict between the religious elements and the Chinese non-religious elements among the Chinese Buddhists in Indonesia.

The way in which Chinese Buddhists negotiated Buddhism and Chinese traditional rituals could be seen in their interpretation of the rituals. Both the traditionalist and the modernist Buddhists saw that the Chinese traditions were often used as a way of accumulating and generating merit, and, for some, as a way of worshipping gods and asking for divine blessings. However, in my opinion, this was the point of contention between the traditionalists and the modernists. The former emphasized the symbolic meaning of the rituals, which they thought was in line with Buddhist teachings; the latter believed that rituals as such were not part of the Buddhist religious tradition and thus could not be used for generating merit.

An example of the contention between the traditionalists and the modernists was the offering of food (Buddhists in Indonesia usually use fruit as an offering) to the image of Buddha. The traditionalists said that in Chinese culture food offerings were a part of the traditional ritual used as a way of showing devotion and respect. Thus, it was acceptable to do that in Buddhism. The modernists, however, thought differently. For them, such an offering was improper as it might deviate from the teachings of Buddha, which emphasized logics and reasoning in search of truth, as seen in the Buddhist term *ehipasiko*.[67] Venerating ancestors was also a source of contention. All agreed that showing respect to ancestors and the departed ones was commendable. However, the modernists believed that making an ancestral altar was going too far. "We are allowed and even encouraged to show respect to our ancestors and those who have departed before us. However, there are no merits in having ancestral altars. There are no such things in Buddhism," said a man in his thirties.[68] On the other hand, the traditionalists believed that having an ancestral altar at home was also a way of practicing Buddhism, as it was the Chinese way of showing respect. "According to our tradition, it [having an ancestral altar] is the correct way of showing our respect."[69] Other things that triggered controversies were rituals such as religious holidays and funerals. According to the modernists, there were many aspects of the rituals that might not be appropriate because they were not in line with Buddhist teachings. But, in the traditionalists' view, Buddhism was open to local tradition and culture. A Chinese Buddhist could be a Buddhist and Chinese at the same time. When a Chinese converted to Buddhism, it did not mean that he had to detach from his cultural background. The influences of Chinese cultural traditions could be accepted, as long as those rituals did no harm. This situation showed that the Chinese interpreted the importance of the rituals according to their religious orientations. Those with a modernist leaning viewed those rituals as religiously improper, which implied that they prioritized "orthodoxy (correct belief)"; others emphasized the symbolic meaning of the rituals and thus viewed them as appropriate, if not mandatory, which showed that they prioritized "orthopraxy (correct practice)."[70]

Another source of disagreement was the interpretation of Godhead. In a more relaxed political environment, some "purist" modernist Buddhists wanted to go back to the scripture, in which, the existence of God as a divine being was non-existent. In the words of one informant, "The pure teachings are the ones found in the holy scripture."[71] In her opinion, the Buddhist holy scripture exclusively referred to the Pāli text of the Tipitaka, which did not acknowledge the existence of God (manifested by the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha in an Indonesian context). Her exclusive view may resonate well with other modernists, but it was rejected by those who accepted other Buddhist texts as the sources of Buddhist teachings as well.

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[67] Literally, *ehipasiko* means "come and see," a term that emphasizes the empirical verification of Buddhist teachings.
[68] Interview, March 1, 2015.
[69] Interview, February 8, 2015.
[70] See Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) for a detailed discussion on religions and Chinese cultural traditions.
[71] Interview, December 7, 2014.

In their opinion, accepting other Buddhist texts did not mean that they were "contaminated" Buddhists.[72] They emphasized the idea that Buddhism could accept other traditions and cultures so long as those traditions and cultures were not harmful. Some of them even cited the sociopolitical context in Indonesia, referring to the first principle of the Indonesian state ideology—that is, the belief in one supreme God.

The controversies surrounding the influence of Chinese traditional rituals in Buddhism, as well as the idea of Godhead, have led Chinese Buddhists to transform and recast their ritual and religious practices. As far as the influence of Chinese traditional rituals is concerned, they privatize the rituals that trigger tensions. The Chinese traditional rituals are usually practiced at home as cultural elements, and the religious rituals are practiced in the temple. In this way, the former are privatized and separated from the latter. During Chinese New Year celebrations, for example, Chinese traditional rituals, such as venerating ancestors, are conducted as private affairs at home, whereas religious rituals (sūtra chanting for invoking blessings) are conducted as public affairs, in a temple. As far as the idea of Godhead is concerned, there are temples where Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha is found in their liturgical texts and rituals practices, and there are also temples in which the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha is not found. Generally these temples have many modernist devotees.

By transforming and recasting their ritual and religious practices—by, for example, separating the traditional/cultural from the religious and adjusting some of their Buddhist practices—Chinese Buddhists are able to negotiate the demands from the State and the modernists dominating Indonesian Buddhist society that they stay away from their traditional ritual practices. This transformation and recasting also enables those who believe in the existence of God, as manifested in the concept of Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha, to practice their religious belief in their ritual and liturgy. Like others who justified their stance from a religious point of view, these people also found a religious justification for recasting and transforming ritual and religious practices: the Buddhist teaching of open-mindedness was often cited as their religious justification. The process of transformation and recasting of Buddhism shows that Chinese Buddhists also adopted religious rationalization. However, their religious rationalization was different from the New Order's, which eradicated the ritual magical content and stressed modernization. Chinese Buddhists rationalized the rituals by making them coherent with religious belief and tradition. All these processes led to substantial diversity among Buddhists in Indonesia. Describing this diversity, a Theravādin *Romo Pandito* said, "Although personally we disagree with their [Chinese Buddhists'] practices, we could accept those diverse practices. Being open-minded is a Buddhist virtue."[73] Another from a Buddhayāna temple said, "The Buddhists [in Indonesia] are like various Lotus flowers, red, white, and other colors. Despite differences in color, they are still Lotus. And, so are the Buddhists. Although they have differences in Buddhist practices, they are still the disciples of Buddha."[74]

CONCLUSION

The trajectory of Buddhism in contemporary Indonesia cannot be separated from the Chinese factor. Although it was the religion of ancient Indonesia, Buddhism is often seen as a Chinese religion. This is because it was the Chinese who reintroduced Buddhism in the early twentieth century, after it had been dormant for a few hundred years.[75] Buddhist temples were built to cater to the spiritual needs of the Chinese, and, hence, Buddhism was mixed with Chinese traditional beliefs. The arrival of Dutch theosophists in

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[72] On April 26, 2015, in an informal discussion with seven Buddhists who are members of a Buddhayāna temple congregation, one of them said that accepting other Buddhist texts would not "contaminate" their Buddhist belief.

[73] Interview, April 5, 2015.

[74] Interview, February 12, 2015.

[75] For a detailed account of the role of the Chinese in reviving Buddhism in Indonesia, see Iskandar Nugraha, *Mengikis Batas Timur dan Barat: Gerakan Theosofi dan Nasionalisme Indonesia* [*Eradicating the Boundaries between the East and the West: Theosophical Movement and Nationalism in Indonesia*]; Martin Ramstedt, "Hinduism and Buddhism," 267–83; Claudine Salmon and Denys Lombard, *Klenteng-Klenteng dan Masyarakat Tionghoa di Jakarta* [*Chinese Temples and Chinese Society in Jakarta*]; and Karel Steenbrink, "Buddhism in Muslim Indonesia," 1–34.

Indonesia revived interest in Buddhism. Still, the majority of Buddhists were ethnic Chinese, and Buddhism was heavily influenced by Chinese culture.

At first this did not create any problems. However, when Indonesia became independent, as a part of its nation-building project it started to Indonesianize its Chinese citizens. The Indonesianization covered the political, social, cultural, and religious spheres. It became more and more intense after the New Order regime came to power. The regime tried to eliminate the influence of Chinese cultural traditions in Buddhism by rationalizing the religion and introducing modern, proper, and nationalist Buddhism. These efforts were manifested in the regime's doctrinal intervention. Chinese Buddhists had to conform to the new social and political reality. Believing in the Buddhist teaching of impermanence, they made accommodations and adapted their rituals and practices, as well as inventing a tradition in order to fit into the official version of Buddhism. Rituals became a political tool for expressing their religious and ethnic identity, and invented tradition was used to claim authenticity. The process of Buddhist modernization was also reinforced by the fact that many Buddhist religious figures were sent to study Theravāda Buddhism, that has a modernist and scripturalist leaning. Not all Theravādins have a scripturalist leaning. However, the Theravāda Buddhism in Indonesia does have a scripturalist tendency. For example, the Indonesian translations of the Pāli texts of the Theravāda are presented next to the Pāli original without commentary or interpretation. In so doing, they claim scripturalist authority. Another example is that the Theravāda regularly holds paritta (Theravāda holy texts) recital contests among Buddhists in Indonesia. The winners are awarded the Presidents Cup at Vesak Day. The focus of this contest is not on the ability to understand the text because the Indonesian translations of the Pāli text provide the literal meaning of the Pāli originals, but rather on the spectacle of reciting them in Pāli, the religious language of Buddhism. Through this kind of scripturalist performance, the Theravādins in Indonesia show their appreciation for the "true" Buddhist texts. This is the version of Buddhism that now dominates in Indonesia.

The fall of the New Order in 1998 changed the Buddhist landscape in Indonesia. Buddhism imbued with Chinese tradition started to re-emerge. The theological debate regarding the existence of God in Buddhism became important. Fueled by different religious orientations and interpretations, this situation triggered tensions among the Chinese Buddhist community. Once again, the Chinese Buddhists had to negotiate between religious and traditional cultural elements in their religion, and to navigate the theological debate on God. In their efforts to do so, they have come to use the Buddhist idea of open-mindedness as a justification to accept differences in their rites and practices. They separate the religious and the cultural, enabling them to practice both. The cultural elements are practiced "offstage" in the private sphere, allowing the religious elements to be the "public transcript." The idea of open-mindedness is also used to give Buddhists the freedom to believe or not to believe in the existence of God. Thus, they innovate, transform, and recast their beliefs to come to terms with the problems they face. In this way, they express their diverse religious and ethnic identities, just like the various petals of the lotus.

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Abstract
When Indonesia’s New Order regime (1965–98) was in power, Chinese Indonesians were asked to abandon their traditional religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism, or to merge into a Buddhism made more Indonesian by means of the elimination of its Chinese traditional influences. This found support among Chinese Indonesian Buddhists who wanted to “purify” Buddhism of its “non-religious elements,” and to separate it from the social stigma of “Chinese religion.” However, the fall of the regime triggered the re-emergence of Chinese rituals in Buddhism. For some, the return of these rituals to Buddhism needs to be carefully examined. While they accept the celebration of Chinese traditions, they do not like them to be blended with Buddhism. This creates tensions between the religious and the cultural elements in Chinese Indonesians’ Buddhism because their Buddhism has been so ingrained in Chinese culture that separating the religious from the cultural is not easy. Through ethnographic study in Surabaya, I investigate discursive practices Chinese Indonesian Buddhists use to come to terms with these tensions. I also examine how these practices shape their ethno-religious identity

construction. My findings show that they use the Buddhist teaching of open-mindedness to come to terms with these tensions, and to innovate, transform and recast their religious practices.

Keywords: Buddhism, Chinese community, Chinese religion, Identity, Indonesia

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