

THOROUGH CREEPING BENEATH A HOLY GLASS COFFIN: A SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICE SEEN IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Incorruptibility is a specific phenomenon that can be seen around the world. In religious belief, it is usually relating to the “holy”. Many monks and saints are found to be incorruptible after death and their bodies are usually kept as holy body relics for worshipping. In Thailand, the worshipping of the holy body relics of Buddhist monk is common and the interesting practice is the thorough creeping beneath a holy glass coffin which has never been seen in any other countries.

KEYWORDS: Holy, Creeping, Glass, Coffin.

INTRODUCTION

Incorruptibility is a specific phenomenon that can be seen naturally seen around the world[1] and there is usually a belief for its strong relationship to the ethical power [2]. In religious belief, it is usually relating to the “holy”. Many monks and saints are found to be incorruptible after death and their bodies are usually kept as holy body relics for worshipping. Sometimes, it was proved that there was a preservation of the holy relics [3] while many others are not. The incorruptible bodies are usually well kept in the monastery and displayed. The pilgrimage to those holy monasteries is usually practice by several believers. In Thailand, the worshipping of the holy body relics of Buddhist monk is common and the interesting practice is the thorough creeping beneath a holy glass coffin which has never been seen in any other countries.

HOLY INCORRUPTIBLE BODIES IN THAILAND

In Thailand, the Buddhism is rooted believed and

practiced. There are several holy body relics of famous Buddhist monks in several Buddhist monasteries around the country. Keeping of the holy body of a holy Buddhist monk in a monastery is common and the displaying is usually in a specific holy hall. In each year, newly death body of Buddhist monks are found to be incorruptible and kept in glass coffin at the monasteries. There are more than 500 monasteries in Thailand that held the holy body relics of holy Buddhist monks. The pilgrimage usually prays at that holy site and offer donation to the monastery. The similar practice can be seen in other nearby Buddhist countries in Indochina, Myanmar and Cambodia.

CREEPING BENEATH A HOLY GLASS COFFIN

The specific interesting religious practice is the thorough creeping beneath a holy glass coffin containing holy body relics of the holy monk.

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As known, there are only 3 sites that allow this practice in Thailand. The first site is called Wat Paipattana Pagoda in Srisaket province, in northeastern region of Thailand, next to Cambodia. The second site is called Wat Chongkhae in Nakornsawan province in central region of Thailand. The third one is called Wat Khaobote in Prachuabkirikhan province in southern region of Thailand. Those three sites are very famous in Thailand for the Buddhist pilgrimage. As known, this practice has never been existed in other places in Thailand or other countries that have monasteries containing holy body relics. This practice is explained by the pilgrimage as an action aiming at holy superstitious power for clearing of bad luck. This is relating to another local belief for thorough creeping beneath an elephant abdomen. Indeed, the local people usually fears for ghost and coffin but the specific case of glass coffin containing holy body relics is totally different. The specific practice has just been occurred for less than one hundred year and it is not possible to trace back when it firstly occurred and who firstly practice it.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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