
TRANSPANTED BUDDHISM IN AND FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia had emerged as the preferred stopping point for Buddhists traveling between India and China via maritime routes as early as the 3rd century A.D. The Buddhist sculptures and texts unearthed so far help trace the existence of Mahayana Buddhism across this region back to the 7th century, and even earlier. In the modern era, Theravada monks from Thailand, Myanmar, and other Southeast Asian countries were dispatched to various non-Buddhist countries as “missionaries” to serve the religious needs of the immigrant communities from their respective home countries. In the 19th century, Mahayana monks from China started emigrating to Southeast Asia. Supported by the local Chinese communities, they built many temples in their host countries, where these communities have subsequently grown in size and influence to date.

Focusing on Southeast Asia, this special issue of *Poligrafi* documents and investigates these trans-regional Buddhist movements past and present. The original idea of this special issue was for the articles to cover a range of Buddhist traditions emigrating into, out of, and within Southeast Asia, and/or explore the original purpose of emigration, the established communities, the present vibrancy of the tradition, etc. When creating content sections, it became clear how diverse and important this topic is in the light of new epistemologies, academic questions and deconstructions, as well as in the search for new models for coexistence, from intergenerational to intercultural, and the ethical challenges associated with it.

Yaoping Liu and Anja Zalta