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SPIRIT HOUSE WORSHIP
IN BANGKOK'S MODERN CONTEXT

KELLY DAVIDSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
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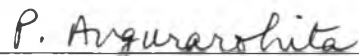
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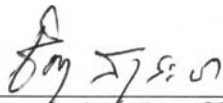
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The past several decades of rapid modernization in Thailand have brought significant changes to the religious beliefs and practices of Thais living in Bangkok. Simple observation reveals there is an increasing role in the non-Buddhist elements of animism, superstition and magic. Traditional Buddhism appears to be decreasing in influence. The changing face of Thai Buddhism as a result of modernization is viewed by many as cause for concern.

This paper examines the current religious situation by focusing on role of spirit houses in Bangkok. The Phra Phum, Jaow Thii and Phra Phrom shrines are examined in detail. In addition to interviews with respected scholars and ritual experts concerning these three types of spirit houses, data was collected from 893 Bangkok residents to determine trends in spirit house beliefs and power perception. The power perception of the different spirit houses is also compared with other currently popular spirit shrines and images.

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