

THAI BUDDHISM AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MAINLAND CHINESE TOURISTS IN
PRESENT-DAY BANGKOK



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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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จุดมุ่งหมายของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ เพื่อค้นคว้าข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแรงจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนในประเทศไทย เช่นเดียวกับลักษณะพฤติกรรมการท่องเที่ยว ของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน ในการท่องเที่ยวเชิงศาสนา การวิจัยนี้ได้กำหนดแนวทางการวิจัยเป็น การวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ และการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยผ่านการทำแบบสอบถาม และการสัมภาษณ์ เพื่อรวบรวมข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ และเชิงคุณภาพ บทสรุปของการวิจัยนี้แสดงถึง แรงจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนที่ได้ไปเยี่ยมชม วัดวาอารามทั้งหมด 3 แห่ง รวมไปถึง ความเข้าใจในศาสนา และวัฒนธรรมของประเทศไทย, การเห็นคุณค่าของภูมิทัศน์ทางศาสนาในประเทศไทย การร้องขอเพื่อให้ประสบโชคดี, การผ่อนคลาย, และการปลดปล่อยจากแรงกดดัน มูลเหตุจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน สำหรับการมาเที่ยวสถานที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ 3 ที่ ประการแรกคือ การมาขอพรเพื่อโชคลาภ ตามมาด้วย ความเข้าใจทางด้านศาสนา และวัฒนธรรม ตามมาด้วย ชื่นชมภูมิทัศน์ทางศาสนาในประเทศไทย, ผ่อนคลาย, และปลดปล่อยวาง ผลลัพธ์ของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ ยังแสดงให้เห็นว่า นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนส่วนหนึ่งมีเบื้องหลังการศึกษาที่ดี และมีคุณภาพ พวกเขาสนใจในวัฒนธรรมไทย พุทธศาสนา ประวัติศาสตร์ และเลือกที่จะปฏิบัติตามขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีของคนในท้องถิ่น นักท่องเที่ยวบางคนไม่ยอมเคารพข้อปฏิบัติทางศาสนา อย่างเช่น การนุ่งกางเกงขาสั้น, ใส่รองเท้าแตะเข้าไปในสถานที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์, และ เคารพบูชาพระเจ้า นอกจากนี้ นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนยังชอบจ่ายซื้อของ และมีพลังการซื้อที่มหาศาล แต่ด้วยกฎหมายท่องเที่ยวที่ออกมาใหม่ของจีน คือ การยกเลิกทัวร์แบบไม่เสียค่า

ธรรมเนียม ลักษณะพฤติกรรมกรท่องเที่ยวของชาวจีนอาจจะมีการเปลี่ยนแปลง เพราะพวกเขาจะมีเวลาในการเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ต่างๆ และเข้าใจวัฒนธรรมมากขึ้น กว่ากรจ่ายซื้อของ สุดท้าย วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ได้ให้คำแนะนำเพิ่มเติมในเรื่องการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวแบบยั่งยืน ของการท่องเที่ยวเชิงศาสนาในประเทศไทยอีกด้วย

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YUXIN JIANG: THAI BUDDHISM AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MAINLAND CHINESE TOURISTS IN PRESENT-DAY BANGKOK. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. CARINA CHOTIRAWE, Ph.D., CO-ADVISOR: ARTHID SHERAVANICHKUL, Ph.D., 166 pp.

This thesis aims to investigate the motivations of Chinese tourists' religious tourism in Thailand, as well as the characteristics of behavior of Chinese tourists in religious tourism. This study chooses quantitative research and qualitative research approaches. It is through questionnaires and interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Conclusions of this study show that the motivations of Chinese tourists' visiting the three temples include understanding Thailand's religion and culture, appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand, appealing for good luck, relaxing and relieving pressure. Chinese tourists' motivations of visiting the three shrines are firstly appealing for good luck, followed by understanding Thailand's religion and culture, appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand, relaxing and relieving pressure. Findings of this thesis also showed that part of Chinese tourists have high quality and good educational background. They are more interested in Thai culture, Buddhist culture, history and better comply with local cultural practices and norms. Some tourists did not obey the local tourist habits, such as wearing sleeveless clothing, shoes during the process of visiting temples and worshipping the gods. Besides, Chinese tourists like shopping and have strong spending power, but with the introduction of China's new tourism law, as well as the cancel of zero fee tour, the tourism behavior of Chinese tourists may change, because they have more time for sightseeing and understanding local culture, rather than shopping. Finally, this dissertation brings forward recommendations on the sustainable development of religious tourism in Thailand. Keywords: Thailand; China; Bangkok; religious tourism; temple; shrine; tourism motivation; tourism behavior

Field of Study: Thai Studies

Student's Signature

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and background of the study

With Thailand's recovery from the 1997 economic crisis, the Thai Tourism industry is growing fast once again. As one of the most famous and popular tourist destinations in the world, millions of tourists from all over the world visit Thailand every year. Thailand also ranks as one of the most popular choices for Chinese tourists. In 2012, there were over two million Chinese tourists who visited Thailand, the number of Chinese tourists being the largest among numbers of tourists from other countries¹. Thailand's beautiful natural landscape, rich culture and good cost performance tourism continue to attract Chinese tourists from all over the country, many Chinese tourists even spend China's important traditional festivals such as Chinese New Year in Thailand. In order to meet these tourists' huge demand for travelling in Thailand, many Chinese cities have opened direct flights to Thailand.

Thailand's long religious culture is one of the important reasons that attracts Chinese tourists. In Thailand, there are many famous temples, such as Wat Phra Kaew, or the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (full official name Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram), Wat Pho, or the Temple of the Reclining Buddha (full official name Wat Phra Chettuphon Wimon Mangkharam Ratchaworamahawihan) and Wat Traimit, or the temple of the Golden Buddha (full official name Phra Phuttha Maha

¹ According to data released by Thailand's Ministry of Tourism, in 2012, there were a total of 22.3 million inbound tourists in Thailand, of which the number of Chinese visitors was 2.7 million, the number of people from Malaysia was 2.5 million, the number of tourists from Japan was 1.3 million, the numbers of visitors from South Korea, Russia, America were respectively 1.1 million, 1.32 million and 76.7 million. The statistical data comes from the conclusion of the Tourism Authority in Thailand on numbers of people going to and out of Thailand.

Suwan Patimakon), which may be considered the top three temples in the country. These three temples attract a large number of Chinese travelers every year. According to the statistical conclusions provided by the China Tourism Association based on the tour itineraries provided by the major travel agencies, about 80 percent of Chinese tourists to Thailand will visit at least one of these three Thai temples (Hou, 2013).

In addition to Buddhism, other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity are being practiced in Thailand. The culture and architecture of these religions also attract Chinese tourists to some extent, attractions associated with these religion include the three major Hindu shrines in Bangkok, of which the three Hindu shrines in the center of Bangkok are most known by Chinese tourists. Thailand's Hindu shrines like the Erawan Shrine, Ganesha Shrine and Trimurati Shrine in Bangkok are famous among Chinese tourists. The Erawan Shrine is most popular for Chinese tourists from within and outside China.

Chinese tourists are very important for the Thai tourism industry and generate large profits and benefits for the country and its people. It is therefore significant for practitioners of the tourism industry to understand the Chinese tourists well. It is worth mentioning that the vast majority of Chinese tourists like to visit Buddhist places in Thailand, and most Chinese tourists are not Buddhists, the aims and motivations for their visiting Buddhist places are these valuable to explore.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations of Chinese tourists who visit places of religious significance in Thailand. First of all it will study Chinese tourists' preferences in Thailand, and then it will identify the religious

aspects in tourism. At the same time the research will evaluate how Chinese tourists think about Thai religious culture and the spiritual experiences of Chinese tourists in Thailand. Through analyzing collected data and verifying findings, the research will also give a profile of the Chinese tourists as well as the purposes and experiences of their journey. The results of this study will be valuable for the Thai tourism industry to provide a better understanding of Chinese tourists and consequently provide better tourism products and services for these customers in the future. The study will explore the value and significance of spiritual experiences that are gained by Chinese tourists during their journeys to Bangkok. The temples and shrines are the most significant and unique religious sites in Thailand. Therefore, Thai religious sites are not suitable only for people who have their religious activities, but also attract millions of secular tourists because of its particular history, scenery, architecture and cultural tradition.

1.2 Literature review

More and more Chinese tourists are coming to Thailand for sightseeing and relaxation, in terms of the reasons, motivations and behavior for Chinese tourists' visiting in Thailand. These studies are from historical, political, economic, cultural, religious and educational perspectives to elaborate on why Chinese tourists would be interested in travelling to Thailand for sightseeing purposes. Moreover, it is worth that a large number of Chinese tourists who travel to Thailand for sightseeing purpose will visit Thai temples and shrines. Actually, most of the Chinese tourists are not Buddhists, and there is still a relatively small number of researches on the motivation of Chinese tourists' in religious sites Thailand. Nonetheless, through the

study of the existing literature, one can better understand the history of the development of relations between China and Thailand, the cooperation between the two governments, the cultural exchanges between Chinese people and Thai people, so as to better help understand why Chinese tourists are not Buddhists but are still willing to go to Thailand for religious experiences.

Cultural exchange between China and Thailand has a rich and long history. Before the establishment of the Chakri Dynasty of Thailand, the Chinese and Thai kingdoms had sent off official envoys to visit each other, and cultural exchanges were carried out accompanied by official interaction. Teizidoum, et al.'s (2008) research points out that after 1782, along with the migration of a large number of Chinese to Thailand, Chinese classical literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, drama, music, etc., spread further in Thailand. From 1782 to 1809, there were Thai translations for Chinese classical novels such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which reflected the prosperous bilateral cultural exchanges of the two countries.

Along with the focus of China's foreign policy on Southeast Asia, as well as the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and Thailand on July 1, 1975, the political, economic, cultural exchanges and contact between the two countries became increasingly frequent and close (Shim, 2000). Research and communication about China and Thailand on political, economic, cultural, religious, educational and other aspects started from then on.

Yu and Chen's (2009: 405-411) (in Chinese: 本书是目前国内唯一研究中泰关系史的通史著作, 是对《中泰关系史简述》的一次扩充。²) book of *History of Sino-Thai Relations* (Yu and Chen, 2009) is currently the only general history work in China which studies the history of Sino-Thai relations, the book can be considered as the expansion based on the *Brief History of Sino-Thai Relations*. It still uses phases to study the history of Sino-Thai relations of two thousand years, it also takes more lengths to discuss bilateral economic and trade, civil exchanges.

In Zhu's books, *A New Development of Sino-Thai Relations during the Turn of the Century* (2002: 69-75) and *Development and Enlightenment of Sino-Thai Relations during 30 Years of Sino-Thai Established Diplomatic Relations* (2008), he generally summarizes the achievements in political, economic, cultural, healthy, scientific, educational and other aspects when diplomatic relations between China and Thailand were established 27 years ago (in Chinese: 本书总结了中泰两国建交27年来在政治、经济、文化、卫生、科教等各方面取得的成就。³). He claims that the reasons for the success is thanks to the exchange of visits between top leaders of the two governments, stimulation by introduced political and economic-friendly policies, as well as the long-standing friendship between peoples of the two countries, pointing out in the development process of the two countries, it should try to solve three problems. These two books also specially mention the relationship between Thai tourism and Chinese tourism, pointing out that with the development of China's economy and the development of tourism in Thailand, there will be more Chinese tourists who choose Thailand as their travel destinations.

² Yu, D. B. & Chen, S. S. (2009). *History of Sino-Thai relations*. Zhonghua Book Company, 405-411.

³ Zhu, Z. M. (2002). *A new development of Sino-Thai relations during turn of the century*. People's Publishing House, 69-75.

Zhang's (2012: 306-311) *Developing Spatial analysis and Expansion path of Sino-Thai Bilateral Trade and Economic Relations* mainly summarizes the characteristics of different stages of development of economic and trade relations between China and Thailand. Then it analyzes the problems in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, finally it figures out strategies and paths for how to further develop Sino-Thai economic and trade relations. He also highlights the fact that tourism occupies an important position in Thailand's and China's trade relations (in Chinese: 本著作就中泰两国经贸关系发展的不同阶段的特征, 两国经贸合作中存在的问题, 中泰经济贸易关系的对策和路径, 旅游业在泰国和中国经贸关系中重要的地位提出了自己的见解。⁴).

Zhang (2012: 306) (in Chinese: 中泰两国学术界就以下领域展开了合作研究, 如中泰关系史有关问题、泰国的潮州人问题、湄公河的开发利用问题、中泰经济合作问题、中泰贸易问题、经济合作问题、东亚合作问题、泰国北部的云南人问题等等。⁵) focus on the research on humanities and social science to describe the exchange between Thailand and China, he found out that academia in China and Thailand carried out joint research over the years around a number of important issues, such as issues related to the history of Sino-Thai relations, issues of natives of Chaozhou (China) in Thailand, issues of development and Utilization of Mekong, issues of Sino-Thai economic cooperation, issues of Sino-Thai trade, economic cooperation, cooperation in East Asia, as well as problems of Yunnan (China) in northern Thailand, and so on. Through collaborative research, academia in China and Thailand have reached a consensus on some issues, they have a new understanding

^{3 5} Zhang, Y. (2012). *Developing spatial analysis and expansion path of Sino-Thai bilateral trade and economic relations*. Beijing People's Publishing House, 306-311.

on some issues, enhancing mutual understanding. Zhang (2012: 307) was also from the standpoint of the government to propose that cooperation between Chinese and Thai governments is one of the positive factors to promote Chinese tourists to go to Thailand (in Chinese: 中国和泰国政府之间的合作是促进中国游客来泰国旅游的积极因素之一。⁶).

Zhang's (2012:311) article describes China and Thailand's exchanges in film arts. He pointed out that some of China's best films, TV series have been translated and introduced to Thailand. Among them, *Three Kingdoms* was translated into Thai and was broadcasted on Thai television during prime time, making *Three Kingdoms* very popular in Thailand (in Chinese:中国的一些优秀影片、电视剧被大量翻译介绍到泰国。《三国演义》被译为泰语,在泰国电视台黄金时段放映,在泰国掀起三国热。⁷). In recent years, Thai movies are also constantly being introduced to China. China Film Group introduced the Thai video *ONG BAK* to China and it earned Chinese audience's praise. In addition, Thailand videos such as *Stepmother*, *Mid Road Gang* have been introduced to China, allowing the Chinese audience to have more understanding about Thailand's history and culture. In 2013, there is a film named *Lost in Thailand* which introduces Thai culture, landscape and culture. The film is a favorite among of Chinese audience's favorite, the box office is over U.S. \$ 160 million, it is the Chinese film which acquires the highest box-office receipts in China in 2013. Hou (2013: 203-208) (in Chinese: 电影艺术方面的交流使中国人更加了解泰国,也培养了一批在中国具有知名度的泰国电影明星,他们为泰国旅游业的发展起到了

^{6 3} Zhang, Y. (2012). Developing spatial analysis and expansion path of Sino-Thai bilateral trade and economic relations. Beijing People's Publishing House, 306-311.

很好的宣传作用。⁸⁾ considers that the exchange of film art makes Chinese people have a better understanding of Thailand, it has also trained a number of well-known Thai movie stars in China, and they play a very good role in publicizing the development of tourism in Thailand.

Yu and Chen (2009: 405-411) (in Chinese: 中泰两国政府间签订了文化交流协定, 两国每年互派留学生。除了政府间留学生计划外, 自费赴双方的留学生人数也在增加。目前, 泰国在中国的留学生超过3万人, 而中国在泰国的留学生也达到1万人。比2001年增长十倍, 在赴泰留学人数最多的前5位国家中, 中国名列第一。⁹⁾ were from the perspective of education to introduce Thai and Chinese exchanges. They pointed out that when Sino-Thai diplomatic relations were established, with the development of the situation, the governments of China and Thailand signed a cultural exchange agreement, the two sides have sent students to each other every year. In addition to student exchange programs between governments, number of students who went to the other country for study at their own expense was also increasing. Currently, the number of Thai students who are studying for a degree or learning the language in China is more than 30,000, while the number of Chinese students who study in Thailand also reaches 10,000, compared with the number in 2001, it nearly tenfold increases. Among the five countries which have the largest numbers of students who study in Thailand, China ranks first. Zou (1975: 219-220) (in Chinese: 中泰教育交流促进了两国及人民之间交流, 留学生也为宣传泰国的旅游业起到了积极的作用。¹⁰⁾ thinks that the educational exchanges and cooperation between China and Thailand has effectively promoted the mutual understanding and friendship between the two

⁸ Hou, J. X. (2013). Chinese movies in Thailand. Commercial Press, 203-208.

⁹ Yu, D. B. & Chen, S. S. (2009). History of Sino-Thai relations. Zhonghua Book Company, 405-411.

¹⁰ Zou, Q. Y. (1975). Brief history of Sino-Thai relations. Yunnan Institute of History, 219-220.

countries and their peoples of the two countries, Thai students in China have also played a positive role in promoting Thai tourism.

With the strengthening of Sino-Thai exchanges, more and more Chinese people are traveling in Thailand, relevant research on Chinese people's tourism in Thailand is also increasing. Webb and Chotithamwattana (2013) contend that Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore are Thailand's four most important tourist source countries, among the four countries, the number of tourists who are from China has increased the most. In 2011, the number of tourists coming to Thailand from China increased by 4.52 times when compared with the number in 1995. Their research also points out that there are also differences in the tourists' travel period in Thailand among tourist from different countries. Tourists from Japan like travelling in Thailand in August, people from China and Korea travel in Thailand during the Chinese New Year break and Taiwan during their summer school holidays. (Guo, 2002) mentions that as the market in tourism in Thailand continuously grew, in 1990, Thailand was included in the official overseas holiday destination scheme of the Chinese government. Guo (2002) conducted a survey to find that among Chinese companies engaging in overseas tourism business in Thailand, the number of companies which were willing to engage in tourism in Thailand is the most. According to Chinese tourists' behavioral characteristics, Guo (2002) derives the most suitable destinations for the Chinese people's tourism abroad, they are Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia. Yoopetch and Shannon (2003) proceed an investigation using 334 Chinese tourists to find that Chinese tourists' positive experiences in Thailand related to nice beaches (42%), Thai culture and the friendliness of the Thai people (14%) and general comments about beautiful scenery

and natural beauty (14%). The negative experiences were about food (36%), followed by tour guides (21%) and traffic (19%). According to the research results, Yoopetch and Shannon (2003) make recommendations on how to improve Chinese tourists' travel experience in Thailand. Zhiqiang (2012) study figures that generally, Chinese tourists have a good impression about the overall Thailand tourism environment, they have a high evaluation on the tourism factors, for example, the culture, the scenic spots and accommodations. Zhiqiang (2012) also pointed out some problems such as Chinese tourists' concerns and worries about the overall environmental situation of Thailand. About 22% of the respondents in his study (Zhiqiang, 2012) showed the problems including frequent political turmoil, natural disasters and service quality problems, as well as issues in service quality, compulsive shopping and consumption, with the rates of 15%, 8% and 12%. (Zhiqiang, 2012) finally concludes that to strengthen the intercultural communication, promote the Thailand's tourism image to Chinese tourists, understanding the Thailand culture would be beneficial to develop a reasonable and effective travel expectation for the Chinese mainland tourists, so as to fundamentally promote the tourism cooperation between China and Thailand.

It can be seen from the above research on Sino-Thai relations that there is a long history of exchange between China and Thailand. Since 1975 when diplomatic ties between Thailand and China was established, the association between China and Thailand in political, economical, cultural, religious, scientific and educational fields have become more frequent, the governments and the people of both countries can better cooperate with and understand each other. These studies show that it is these cooperation and exchanges that prompt Chinese and Thai

governments to formulate many policies which are beneficial for Chinese people to go to Thailand for travel, and more Chinese people are willing to travel in Thailand.

1.3 The Definition of Religious Experience

Religious experiences for tourists visiting a foreign country can have many levels, in terms of its intensity. Religious experiences is at a high level when an individual is aware of something or someone that transcends – beyond logical understanding or control-and whose action or intention has had or will have a direct impact on his or her life, either physical, psychological or spiritual that transcends him or her. Generally speaking, religious experience reflects spiritual values that are held internally and moral principles that are taken as guidelines for living. However, at the same time, it can also fundamentally transform these values and principles, by producing a new set of symbols that influence or determine the course of life. On the other hand, religious experiences in the form of mysterious feelings. Religious experiences would more likely have a positive effect on the subject's Buddhist belief, either by leading the people to move from “non-believing” to “believing” or by strengthening their preexisting belief. In this sense, to those who have them, religious experiences “are totally convincing” and “have long-lasting effects, for positive modes and happiness, for altruistic urges to help others, and for the integration of the self”.

Not only Chinese, but also tourists from all over the world visit the religious sites in Bangkok. Comparing with the westerners, most of Chinese tourists experience the desire to worship and to pray to the Buddha images or shrines while they are visiting the religious places. Whether Chinese tourists believe in a religion or

not, most of them still show respect to religion and pursue protection and good fortune from the Thai religious sites. Places of religious significance in Bangkok are important for Chinese tourists in both their sightseeing and religious experiences based on the reputation of Thai temples and shrines, in terms of being famous tourist destinations as well as being considered a sacred place where wishes can be granted. But for average Chinese tourists, religious experiences are usually at the more basic level similar to other cultural practices. The observation, participating, appreciating and praying in religious sites are the religious experiences demonstrated by most Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists have been told by their tour guide during their tour in religious sites in Bangkok that the spiritual powers must be held in awe and that paying respect to the religious significances is necessary.

1.4 Objectives

Based on the above description, this thesis forms the following objectives.

-To study the religious sightseeing pattern of mainland Chinese tourists in Bangkok.

-To investigate how various aspects of Thai Buddhism respond to the needs of mainland Chinese tourists in Bangkok.

1.5 Hypothesis

The number of Chinese tourists in Thailand is increasing rapidly and tourists from Mainland China will soon become the largest group of foreign visitors within the next five years. Various aspects of Thai Buddhism i.e. Hinduism, Theravada

/Mahayana Buddhism, are manifested in sightseeing trips to famous temples and shrines in Bangkok.

1.6 Research methodology

This thesis makes use of a combination of qualitative research and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research mainly understands Chinese tourists' motivation, travel experience of religious tourism in Thailand. Qualitative research seeks to understand motivations and characteristics of travel behavior of Chinese tourists' religious tourism in Thailand.

In this thesis, it is through literature review that one understands the history of development of relations between China and Thailand, as well as promoting exchanges between China and Thailand in political, economic, cultural and educational areas for tourism in Thailand.

In this thesis, the use of questionnaire to investigate Chinese tourists' motivations and travel experience of religious tourism in Thailand is adopted. The questionnaires were distributed and taken back through on-site methods. The questionnaires were distributed in places in which they specifically offer travel services for Chinese tourists who want to travel in Thailand, the sampling method is random sampling. The specific content of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

300 copies of questionnaires have been distributed, the questionnaires were specifically targeted at Chinese tourists from mainland China coming to Thailand, they were sent and taken back through on-site ways in travel agencies

which specialize in Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand, using a random sampling method. The data collection is during the year 2012-2013, from top three inbound travel agents which only receive Chinese tourists. These top three inbound travel agents are established by Chinese people living in Thailand, so the agents have the advantage of focusing on the Chinese market not only because they speak the same language but also they understand Chinese tourists' preference better than other local Thai tour agency. Since Chinese tourists have already become the largest group travel to Thailand, the top three tour companies can receive a new group from mainland China almost everyday. All the questionnaires are distributed to Chinese tourists from their tour guides by the end of the trip to Thailand.

The qualitative data was collected through face-to-face interviews which took place during 2012-2013. This study is through personal interviews to understand motivations of Chinese tourists' religious tourism in Thailand and the characteristics of their travel behavior. Subjects of the interviews include three Chinese tourists who have experience of religious tourism in Thailand, three guides who provide services for Chinese tourists in Bangkok, as well as three operators of travel companies who receive Chinese tourists. Specific interview outline is shown in Appendix 2.

Interview objects included operators who planed Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand tourism, guides who are responsible for Chinese tourists, as well as Chinese tourists. Among tourists interviewed in this study, there were five tourists who were 20-30 years old, two visitors were 30-40 years old, and two tourists were 40-50 years old. There was a visitor who was over the age of 50. Four visitors were

male, six tourists were female. These visitors have been to Thailand for religious tourism for more than two times, thus they were more familiar with Thai religious places to cooperate with the investigation of this study. Among the guides interviewed in this study, there were three men, two women, they were 28-38 years old, they have been engaged in tourism for Chinese tourists for more than five years, thus they have a more profound understanding for characteristics of religious tourism behavior of Chinese tourists and they could better cope with the author of this study in investigation. Among the operators interviewed in this study, there were four male operators and a female operator, they were 39-41 years old, and they have an average of more than eight years of experience of being operators in tourism. Thus, they have a more profound understanding for the tourism industry in Thailand and the behavioral characteristics of Chinese tourists' religious tourism, thus they could better meet this study in investigation.

Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. The interview was carried out through a face to face way in the top three travel agencies in Bangkok which deal with receiving Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand. When the interview began, the interviewers first of all announced the purpose of this investigation, explaining how the interview content will be used. Some generic terms would be involved in the interview was also explained for the respondents to answer questions better. After acquiring the approval of the respondents', the content of the interview was taken down.

1.7 Scope of the study

This thesis aims to explore the motivations, characteristics of travel behavior and travel experience of Chinese tourists' religious experiences in Thailand, of which, it mainly explores the motivations for tourism, understanding why Chinese people are not Buddhists but the vast majority of them come to Thailand to visit temples and shrines.

Before learning about Chinese people's motivations, the thesis first explores the history of development of the relations between China and Thailand, as well as the exchanges between the two countries in political, economic, cultural and educational fields. It is from a macro perspective to understand why Chinese people are keen to travel to Thailand for sightseeing purposes. Then it presents the advantages of tourism development in Thailand, including Thailand's natural scenery, culture, and so on. It introduces Chinese people's plans of travel in Thailand travel and the attractions that they like to go to. Finally, it studies Thailand's Buddhist culture, Buddhist architecture, including the three major temples in Thailand: Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, and Wat Traimit, and Thailand's three shrines: Erawan Shrine, Trimurti Shrine, Ganesh Shrine, as well as why Chinese people are willing to come to visit these temples and shrines, so as to analyze the reasons for why even though most of the Chinese people do not have religious beliefs, but they still make it a point to visit religious sites.

In order to obtain more empirical evidence, this thesis uses questionnaire and interview to collect data and information, through questionnaire to understand the motivations and tourism experience of Chinese tourists' in

religious sites, through interview to learn motivation and characteristics of travel behavior of Chinese tourists. Through the analysis of data and information, it seeks to understand the motivations, travel experiences and travel behavior of Chinese tourists' religious tourism, which can enable one to develop appropriate measures according to these characteristics.

1.8 Significance and usefulness of the research

The significance of this thesis lies in that it first of all it makes up for the deficiencies of previous studies, it explores the impact of religions for Chinese people's religious experiences in Thailand, understanding the motivations for why Chinese people are not Buddhists but they are also keen to come to Thailand to visit Buddhist places, characteristics of their tourism behavior and travel experience. Secondly, it is in favor of Thai and Chinese governments and tourism managers to be based on characteristics of Chinese tourists' religious tourism to develop appropriate measures to better promote Chinese tourists' travel in Thailand and facilitate Thai tourism sector's management, and ultimately achieving an ideal win-win situation.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING IF THAI TOURISM FOR THE CHINESE MARKET

2.1 Introduction of this chapter

This chapter provides a brief introduction to Thai tourism. First of all it introduces the development and history of tourism in Thailand, followed by reasons leading to the rapid growth of the tourist industry in Thailand. Then, it introduces the background information of Chinese tourists who travel in Thailand. Finally, it discusses how Chinese travel agencies promote Thai tourism industry, as well as the sightseeing plans (Bangkok - Pattaya, Bangkok - Chiang Mai, Bangkok - Chiang Mai) that they develop for Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand.

2.2 A review of Thai tourism

2.2.1 A brief history of Thai Tourism

Tourism Authority of Thailand was founded in 1960 and it is the Thai government organization dedicated to the promotion of tourism, since then, tourism in Thailand began and developed rapidly (Brummans, 2009). Although the Thai tourism industry has been repeatedly impacted by a number of unexpected events such as the Asian financial crisis, Thailand's political crisis and floods, with the efforts of Thai government and private sectors as well, Thailand's tourism industry has recovered from several crises (Cooper, Cooper et al., 2005). Until today, Thailand has become one of the countries in the world with the most developed tourism industry, and its tourism has become one of the industries which have the strongest ability to earn foreign exchange in Thailand (Chang, 2010).

2.2.2 The development and growth of Thai Tourism

Agriculture, manufacturing and services are three pillar industries in Thailand. Tourism as one of the three pillars of Thai economy gained a rapid development in the 1980s, in the 1990s, especially in recent years, it has made great development (Chang, 2010). The number of foreign visitors to Thailand rose from a mere 2.44 million in 1985 to 22 million in 2012 (Sen, 2012). Tourism revenues during the same period also increased from \$ 1.14 billion to 250 billion U.S. dollars (Sen, 2012). Tourism has become the industry which earned the most foreign exchange for Thailand for many years (Brummans, 2009). Foreign exchange earnings of Thai tourism ranks first place among Southeast Asian countries, it is also the highest in China, Thailand has become the world's top ten tourist markets. In 2012, Thai agricultural production accounted for about 12% of its GDP, agricultural products were one of the main export commodities, the main agricultural products included rice, rubber, cassava, maize, sugar cane and tropical fruits (Trading Economics, 2013). In 2012, Thai manufacturing output accounted for about 35.6% of the GDP, the major manufacturing categories were mining, textile, plastic, food processing, toy, automotive assembly, building materials, petroleum and chemical industry (Trading Economics, 2013). In 2012, Thai service sector accounted for 43% of the GDP (Trading Economics, 2013). Within the service section, the tourism industry is the most important, the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was 16.7% in 2012 (Trading Economics, 2013). It can be seen from these data that tourism has become one of the most important industries in Thailand.

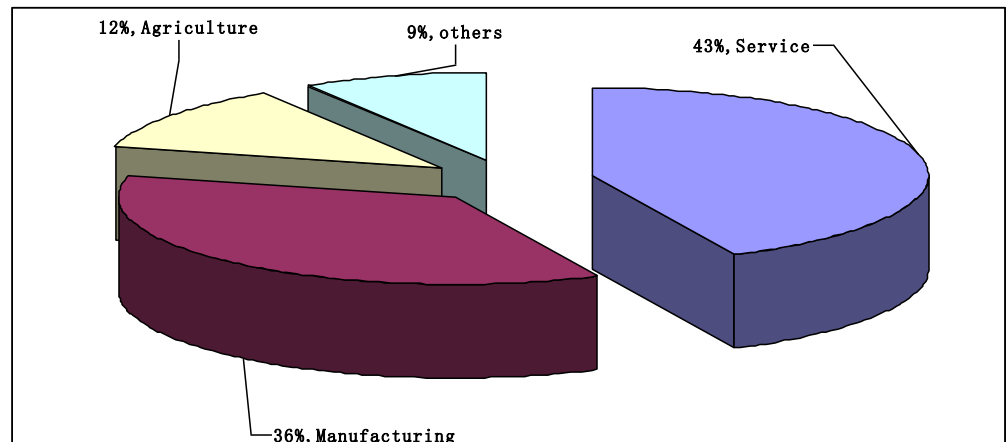


Figure 1 Component Parts of Thailand's GDP in 2012

Sources: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/thailand/gdp-growth-annual>

Sources: http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/thailand2013.pdf

The fact that Thai tourism has made tremendous development, is due largely to the Thai government's attention and efforts. A well known as the Tourism Authority of Thailand was in 1960 (Brummans, 2009). To speed up the development of tourism, Thai government carried out a major adjustment in the tourism management agencies in the 1980s (Chang, 2010). It set up a tourism committee under the Prime Minister comprising, relevant departments such as the Tourism Authority, the Department of Transportation, the aviation department, the Police Department, largest travel agencies, tourism associations and restaurant association (Chang, 2010). The Committee held a meeting once a month to deal with problems such as travel planning, development of regulation and other major issues. The Tourism Authority of Thailand was in charge of promotion, development and service work the national tourism. Successive heads of Thai government continued to attach great importance to work of the tourism committee and development of tourism, the Prime Ministers personally participated in development of tourism plans and often offered some guidance for tourism as well as personally participated in major

events to promote tourism in Thailand (Cooper, Cooper et al., 2005). Recently Thai Prime Ministers such as Aphisit Vejjajiva and Yingluck Shinawatra often took part in activities of promotion of tourism towards Chinese people (Sen, 2012).

2.2.3 Reasons for the rapid development of Thai Tourism in the past five years.

2.2.3.1 Resources

Tourism resources are a prerequisite for the development of tourism (Chang, 2010). Thailand's tourism resources, including both human resources and natural scenery are very rich, and have strong characteristics (Brummans, 2009). There are a full range of tourism resources in Thailand to meet the varied needs of tourists. The seas, waves, beaches, hot springs and waterfalls, dense river network, rolling hills and numerous animals are valuable tourism resources that nature has given Thailand (Brummans, 2009).

2.2.3.2 Political factors

In the 1980s, the Thai government of gen Suchinda Kraprayoon recognized that international tourism as an emerging industry can not only directly earn foreign exchange but also bring new vitality for economic development (Brummans, 2009). Therefore, successive governments in Thailand have attached great importance to the development of tourism. The Thai government pays attention to tourism, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects (Terzidou, Styliadis et al., 2008). Firstly, it increases the development of tourism resources and construction of tourism infrastructures. Governments in the past invested heavily in developing a variety of tourism resources hence major tourist cities now have

international airports with good facilities (Lotis, 2009). Highways in Thailand also have good quality. Secondly, it enhances publicity. The government has published one hundred thousand beautiful albums, one million posters and hundreds of videotapes to advocate Thai customs, Thailand still establishes tourism offices and institutions in Japan, America, the Netherlands, Latin America, France and other countries (Cooper, Cooper et al., 2005). Thirdly, the government simplifies immigration procedures and relaxes restrictions on length of stay in Thailand for tourists. Fourthly, it trains tourism personnel (Chang, 2010). Now, in major universities, as well as a variety of specialized tourism schools in Thailand, travel professional courses are offered, which cultivate specialized personnel in hotel management and tourism planning and other aspects (Terzidou, Stylidis et al., 2008).

2.2.3.3 Location factors

Thailand is a low latitude peninsula country with tropical monsoon climate and tropical rainforest climate mainly (Chang, 2010). In its northern mountain areas, the climate of four seasons is almost the same, there are waterfalls, lakes and a variety of birds and beasts, attracting tourists to go there (Sen, 2012). Its central plains are one of the world's most fertile grounds for rice and fruit-growing areas, there are colorful traditional cultures and ways of life, as well as beaches in the east coast and vibrant cosmopolitan city, Bangkok (Chang, 2010). In its southern peninsula, there are well preserved beaches and idyllic islands (Sen, 2012). In different regions in Thailand, there are different natural scenery and cultural landscape, these different landscapes attract tourists to travel around in Thailand. While developed transport in Thailand also provides a convenient conditions for tourists' traveling in

Thailand. Thailand's civil aviation industry is developed well, there are 37 airports in Thailand, including 8 international airports. Suvarnabhumi International Airport is an important air traffic hub in Southeast Asian, there is a total of 53 countries, 80 airlines which have fixed air routes in Thailand, 89 international air routes can reach more than 40 cities in Europe, America, Asia and Oceania, the domestic air routes is throughout 21 large and medium cities in Thailand. Visitors can take a train from Bangkok to other major cities in Thailand and the region. Visitors can take express trains and tourist trains to travel in Thailand. Long-distance passenger transportation is very developed throughout Thailand, through the well-developed long-distance passenger transportation network, tourist can reach all domestic cities in Thailand. Thailand's hotel industry is also developed for tourists coming to Thailand for traveling. Bangkok is one of cities with the largest number of five-star hotels. Hotels in Bangkok have not only service of high quality, but also the best price. The report released by Hotels.com in 2012 showed that among 26 major countries and regions in the world, the average price for a room per night in five-star hotels in Bangkok was about 5500 baht, becoming the hotels with rooms of the highest performance price ratio in the world in 2012 (Cai, 2013).

2.2.3.4 Cultural factors

Thai Buddhist culture is an important factor attracting tourists from all over the world to come to Thailand for tourism. Taking the Buddhist landscape in Thailand as an example, there are over 95% of the population in Thailand who believe in Buddhism, Buddhism is the state religion of Thailand (Chang, 2010). It is an ancient civilized country with two thousand years of history of Buddhism (Chang,

2010). In this country, there are more than 30,000 ancient temples and magnificent palaces (Iotis, 2009). Many of the Thai Buddhist temples have magnificent appearance, the architectural decorations are exquisite, which are entitled as the reputation of "Thai art museums", they are Thailand's national treasures, cultural essence (Terzidou, Styliadis et al., 2008). 90% of tourists who travel in Thailand will go to appreciate Thai Buddhist architecture. Buddhism plays an important role in norms of Thai people's daily life, and forms invisible tourism resources (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). The perception is that any person who arrives in Thailand will strongly feel Thai people's friendly, charming Thai smile (Chang, 2010). This fraternization mostly comes from Thai people's Buddhist beliefs. Compared to Chinese-style Mahayana (emphasizing self-cultivation, saving other living creatures), Thai Theravada has more emphasis on self-introspection and personal practice, as well as control of body movements and emotions (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). Buddhists believe that anger and excitement will lead to disaster, so Thai people usually focus on interpersonal peace, modesty, they have less impassioned moments (Brummans, 2009). It is Thailand's unique serenity and tranquility that attracts tourists from around the world, it also makes Thailand one of the countries which have the highest rates of being re-visited by tourists. About 3 out of 5 of the foreign tourists who are now visiting in Thailand admit to having visited Thailand for more than one time (Sen, 2012).

For Chinese tourists, Buddhist culture in Thailand has a great appeal. Chinese tourists will also visit churches when they travel in western countries to admire the architecture and culture of Christianity, but Chinese tourists rarely worship the Christian God. (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). When Chinese tourists go to

Thailand, they not only appreciate Buddhist culture and architecture, since many Chinese tourists themselves are not Buddhists, but also worship Buddha image (Cai, 2013). The reason is that China was subject to the influence of Buddhism for a thousand of years, most Chinese tourists have a considerable degree of understanding of Buddhist culture and knowledge, Chinese tourists also psychologically identify with Buddhist culture highly (Sen, 2012). Therefore, although many Chinese tourists themselves are not Buddhists, they also want to visit Buddha image.

2.3 Thai Tourism in Chinese market

After the end of World War II, many countries made use of national advantages of geographical positions, well-established transportation and communication facilities, developed industrial production and rich tourism resources to develop and implement the strategies in their tourism industries and achieved great success (Sen, 2012). Both the number of reception of visitors and foreign exchange earnings acquired in tourism made Spain top the list in the world and it has enjoyed being the world's largest tourist country for many years (Brummans, 2009). The Thai government drew on the successful experience of the development of tourism in Spain and other countries to clearly bring forward strategies for development of tourism and set up a specific tourism administration in 1960 (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). Through the development of planning, increasing investment and expanding publicity, it accelerated the development of tourism and made it a major tourism market in Asia and in the world. Since then, large numbers of foreign tourists have been to travel in Thailand for sightseeing and recreational

services (Brummans, 2009).

China and Thailand established diplomatic relations in 1975, and since then the two countries have entered a rapid development period in tourism cooperation and exchange (Sen, 2012). In 1993, China and Thailand signed the "Sino-Thai Tourism Cooperation Agreement" (Cai, 2013). Since then, a large number of Chinese people started to travel to Thailand for sightseeing and recreation (Sen, 2012). Under the cooperation before the two countries' governments and tourism agencies, more and more Chinese people have traveled to Thailand (Shim, 2000). By virtue of the advantages of its political, cultural, natural resources and other advantages, Thailand has also become one of the most popular tourist destinations for Chinese tourists. China Tourism Research Institute announced the top ten popular tourist destinations: Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Maldives, the United States and Cambodia (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). Thailand has become one of Chinese tourists' favorite destinations of traveling abroad, regardless of its several well-known attractions in Bangkok. In restaurants or shopping centers, and even the airport, there are large numbers of Chinese tourists everywhere. In 2006, the number of Chinese tourists visiting to Thailand was 1,033,305, in 2012, the number has reached 2,000,000, China has become the country with the largest number of tourists coming to Thailand (Cai, 2013).

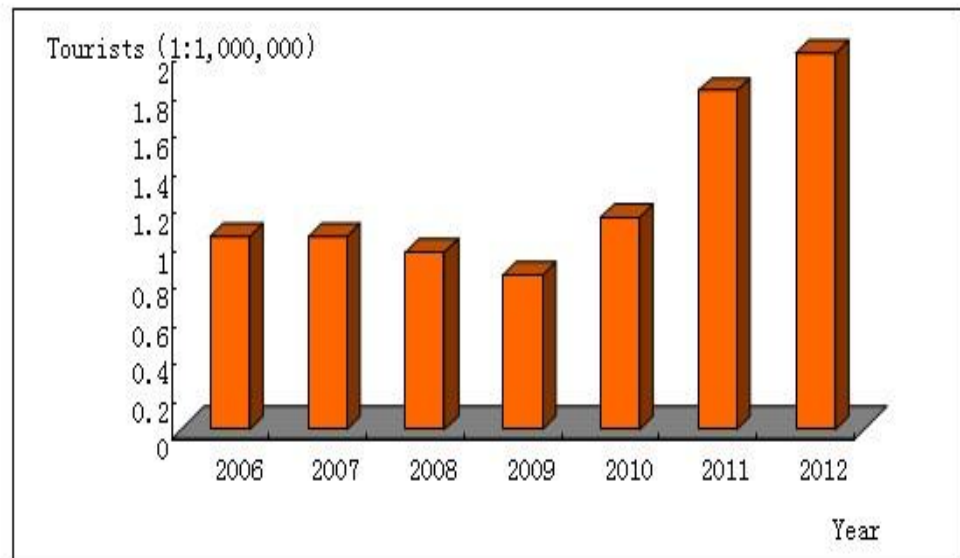


Figure 2 The Yearly Increasing Number of Chinese Tourists Traveling in Thailand (2006-2012)

2.3.1 Analysis on Background information of Chinese tourists

China Tourism Research Institute recently released a report, pointing out that in 2012, the number of Chinese exit tourists was 82,000,000, an increase of 16.7%; the outbound tourism spending was about \$ 85 billion, an increase of 20% (Cai, 2013). According to statistics, from 2002 to 2011, the number of China's outbound tourism increased from 16.60 million to 70.25 million, increasing by 323%, becoming the country with the world's fastest growing number of outbound tourism (Cai, 2013).

Since 2008, as a result of political unrest in Thailand, many Chinese tourists have hesitated to choose Thailand as a tourist destination (Cai, 2013). However, with the perceived stability of political situation in Thailand, coupled with the cooperation between Chinese and Thai governments, more and more Chinese

tourists began to return to Thailand .China Tourism Research Institute recently released a report which points out that, since 2008, the number of tourists who go to Thailand from China shows a growing trend yearly (lotis, 2009). In 2008, the number of Chinese tourists coming to Thailand was 0.83 million. In 2012, the number of Chinese tourists to Thailand grew to 2.2 million (Sen, 2012).

According to the data that the author acquired through the survey on several travel agencies, the number of tourists from southern China and eastern China is the highest, the number of those who are from central China and northern China is less, the number of tourists from western China is the least (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). The reason is that southern and eastern China have a relatively developed economy, travelers of these areas are more able to pay the travel costs to Thailand (Cai, 2013). There is also an important reason that culture in eastern and southern China is more similar the culture in Southeast Asia, so tourists from these places in China are more willing to choose Thailand as their travel destination (Cai, 2013).

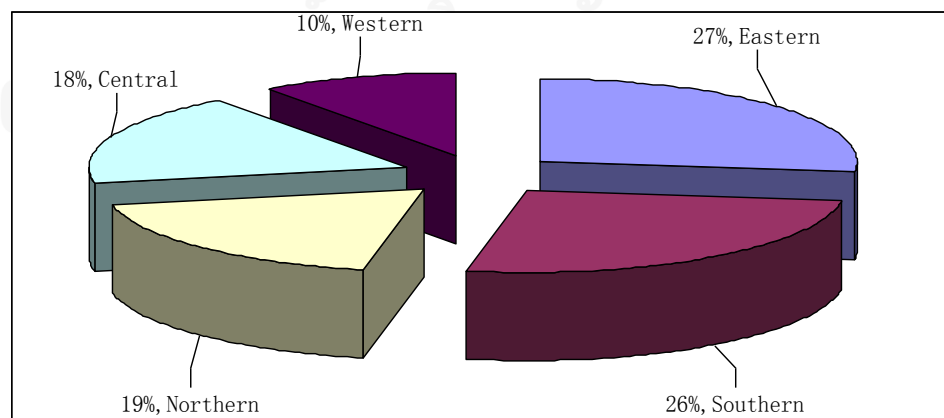


Figure 3 Component Parts of Tourists Travelling in Thailand from China

2.3.2 Marketing of China Travel agents

Yoopetch and Shannon (2003) proved that about 90% of Chinese tourists went to Thailand with tour groups. The reason for this is that, travel agencies can help tourists with rooms and air tickets booking, food reserves, which brings tourists great convenience. Then, travel agents enable tourists to enjoy more reasonable food and accommodation. Finally, tour groups are equipped with Thai-Chinese speaking tour guides, and they are familiar with the local landscape and customs in Thailand, they can be better in guiding Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand. Therefore, more and more Chinese people are keen to travel in Thailand, which brings great business opportunities to travel agents who are engaged in the Thai tourism business.

China Travel agents operate mainly through distributing leaflets, newspaper advertising, bidding rank, network marketing to promote trips to Thailand. First of all, many travel agencies have produced attractive leaflets, the contents of the leaflets include pictures of Thailand's unique scenery, temples and some simple introductory text. Employees of travel agencies distribute these leaflets to passerby in populated areas (Cai, 2013). Then, many travel agencies advertise advertisements of tourism in Thailand through newspapers, coupled with pictures of the most famous attractions of Thailand, as well as a text for introduction (Cheung, Nelson et al., 2005). Again, many travel agencies have chosen bidding rank, through paying search engine companies, such as Baidu, Google, Bing, etc., to make it easier for consumers to find the travel agencies websites (Cai, 2013). For example, when people search tourism in Thailand through Baidu, they can find a lot of travel sites,

consumers can visit these websites for information of travelling in Thailand. Finally, many travel agencies have begun to use the Internet to promote tourism in Thailand, for example, they develop websites, through the blog, forums and other social media to promote Thai scenery, culture, sharing travel experiences in Thailand with consumers.

Figures 1-3 use figures and text to describe tourist attractions in Thailand. Figure 4 uses pictures about tourists' traveling in Chiang Mai, Puji Island to show the blue sky, sunshine, water, animals, building in Thailand. Figure 5 introduces the travelling route and time schedule arranged by travel agencies for Chinese tourists' travelling in Thailand, coupled with pictures of some buildings with Thai features. Figure 6 describes Thailand as "Oriental Hawaii" and "a state with thousand Buddha". It introduces the general information about the travel agency, the service that it provides for travelling in Thailand, as well as the costs of traveling in Thailand.



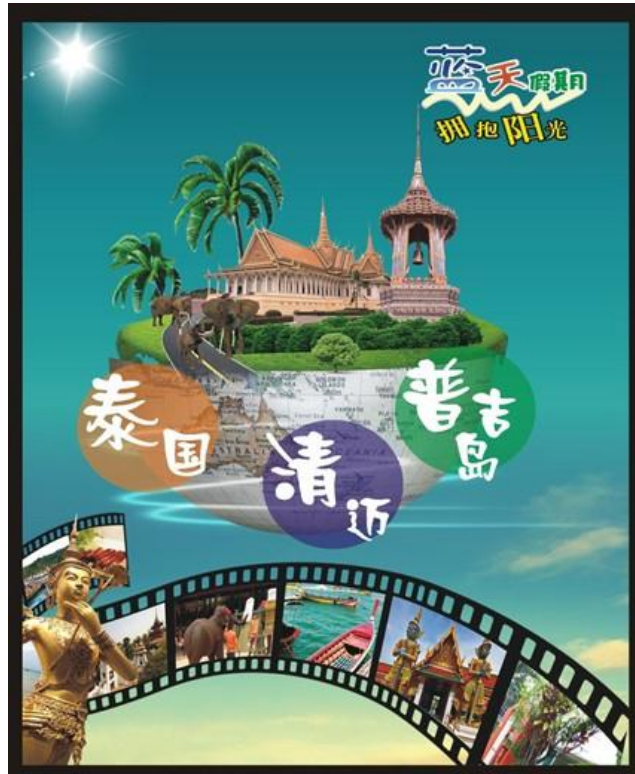


Figure 4 Leaflets of China Travel Service

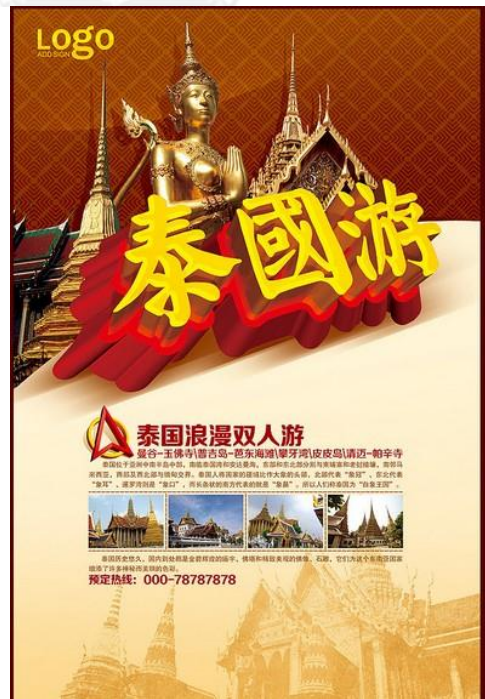


Figure 5 Leaflets of China Travel Service

enjoying the natural beauty of Pattaya. Appreciation of cultural activities include enjoying a nightly cultural performances at night to understand Thai people's entertainment culture; visiting Waxworks Palace to understand Thai history and culture, through the Four Seasons Village to understand the typical lifestyle of ordinary Thais. The tour itinerary includes visiting Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit and the Erawan Shrine. The entertainment activities include Sriracha Tiger Zoo, participating in elephant trekking, scuba diving, driving beach cars and playing beach volleyball, as well as enjoying traditional Thai massage and watching transgender cabaret performances.



Figure 7 Promotional Picture of China International Travel Service (Beijing)

2.3.3.2 Bangkok- Chiang Mai tour offered by China Youth Travel Service (Nanjing)

In the Bangkok - Chiang Mai itinerary, the sightseeing activities include visiting Chiang Mai Night Bazaar, the ancient city of Chiang Mai. In appreciation of natural scenery, Maerim, Doi Suthep and Doi Inthanon in Chiang Mai. The cultural

itinerary includes visiting the long-neck ethnic tribe to understand their special folk custom, visiting European style street to enjoy unique culture of Thai handicrafts. The religious tour includes visiting Wat Chedi Luang, Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, Wat Pra Kaew, Wat Traimit, Wat Traimit and Erawan Shrine. The entertainment arrangements include enjoying Thai massage and watching transgender cabaret performances show.



Figure 8 Promotional Picture of China Youth Travel Service (Nanjing)

2.3.3.3 Bangkok-Phuket tour offered by Shanghai Spring and Autumn International Travel Service

Cosidering Bangkok-Phuket tour, the sightseeing activities include visiting the Grand Palace, Wat Pho, Wat Arun and enjoying the night view of Chaopraya River. In appreciation of natural beauty, tourists will be arranged to appreciate natural

scenery in Phuket and Phi Phi Island. The cultural tour includes enjoy a night trip includes enjoying cultural performances at night to the entertainment culture of Thai people. The religious itinerary includes visiting Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho and Erawan Shrine. The entertainment arrangements include: swimming and snorkeling in Phuket, sunbathing to enjoy Thai massage, watching transgender cabaret performances show.



Figure 9 Promotional Picture of Shanghai Spring and Autumn

International Travel Service

2.3.3.4 Analysis

Judging from these travel arrangements, visiting religious sites is one of the most important arrangements that the Chinese travel agencies offer, especially Wat Phra Kaew, Erawan Shrine in Bangkok have been chosen as the tourist destinations in the three Chinese travel agencies' arrangements. Besides, there are

also more arrangements for sightseeing, cultural and entertain tourism, but travel agencies design different specific itineraries. While the travel agencies provide less arrangements for appreciation of natural beauty in Thailand. Hou (2013) points out in the research results on Chinese mainland tourists' perception for travelling in Thailand that number of Chinese tourists who enjoy and experience the Thai religious culture accounts for 51% of the total number of Chinese tourists touring in Thailand, the number of those who participate in entertainment activities accounts for 61%, the number of visitors who sightsee in Thailand accounts for 31%, number of those who visits Thai culture account for 64% of the total, number of Chinese people who enjoy the natural scenery accounts for 41 % of the total number of visitors (Cai, 2013). This confirms that the Chinese travel agencies' arrangements for Chinese people's travelling in Thailand are reasonably proceed. Because more than half of the people will go to experience Thailand's religious culture and the religious sites that the tourists expect visit are Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Taimit and Wat Pho and the Erawan Shrine, in Bangkok. Therefore, almost every arrangement of the Chinese travel agencies' for travelling takes religious sites set as tourist destinations. While there are also many Chinese tourists who choose sightseeing, experiencing Thai culture and participation in entertainment activities in Thailand, but they do not concentrate on certain places in sightseeing, experiencing Thai culture and participation in entertainment activities, these places are scattered in Bangkok , Chiang Mai, Phuket, Phi Phi island and many other places. Thus the arrangements for different itineraries of in sightseeing, experiencing Thai culture and participation in entertainment activities by Thai-Chinese tour operators for tourists in Thailand are different.

2.4 Conclusion

In recent years, tourism in Thailand has developed rapidly, which thanks to its government efforts and notices, tourism resources, unique culture and location factors and so on. Chinese tourists have become the largest group travelling in Thailand, and visiting Buddhist sites is the important content for Chinese tourists' travelling in Thailand.



CHAPTER III

Buddhist temples and Hinduism shrines as top six religious sites for Chinese tourists

3.1 Top six religious sites for Chinese tourists in Bangkok

This chapter first introduces the history, culture and architectural features of three important temples: Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho and Wat Traimit in Thailand, as well as why these temples attract large number of Chinese tourists. It will also provide the history and cultural characteristics of three Hindu shrines in Thailand: Erawan Shrine, Trimurti Shrine, Ganesh Shrine, as well as why they are attractive for Chinese tourists.

3.2 Reasons why Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit known as top three temples for Chinese tourists

Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit are three major temples in Thailand which have very high visibility for Chinese tourists who travel to Thailand. The official Chinese website of Thailand's Tourism Authority: <http://tourismthailand.org.cn/>, introduces the history, cultural practice, architectural features, opening hours and other important information of the three temples for Chinese tourists.

Thailand's Chinese-language newspaper *Sing Sian Yer Pao Daily News* as one of the most popular Chinese media in Bangkok provides traveling information for Chinese tourists via various social media. In addition to introducing cultural practices, landscape features of the temples in Thailand. Thailand's largest English-language

newspaper, The Bangkok Post is devoted to introduction of tourism in Thailand, it also specially introduces Thai Temples to Chinese tourists. Compared with the above Media, in addition to cultural practices, architectural features of the three temples, it also highlights the points to be given special attention in visiting these temples, such as apparel requirement, avoiding making much noise, admiration fees and so on. Chinese tourists understand that the three temples are the three major temples in Thailand, thus most of Chinese tourists are interested to visit these three temples in Thailand. The findings in this thesis also confirm that 70% of visitors would access the internet to have an overview of Thailand before they travelled to Thailand. Thus they have a primary understanding of the three temples in Thailand and show that they would like to visit them. There are a large number of temples in Thailand, they are magnificent, they have their own distinct characteristics and have been known and appreciate by tourists who come to Thailand from all over the world. Generally speaking, Wat Phra Kaew is the best known by Chinese tourists, it is arranged in every tourist itinerary, and Wat Pho is beside Wat Phra Kaew, so some tour agencies will arrange to visit it. The interviews with guides and operators of the travel agencies also confirm that 90% of their arrangement for Chinese tourists included Wat Phra Kaew, about 50 % of the tours included Wat Pho. Wat Traimit is generally not included in travel itineraries of most travel agencies, as many visitors learn through websites that this temple is one of Thailand's three major temples, coupled with that its is located in Chinatown and was built by Chinese, so many people are still willing to worship the temple. Through interviews with guides and operators of the travel agencies it also proves that 30% of their arrangement for Chinese tourists includes visiting Wat Traimit. Through interviews with tourists, about 80 percent of

the visitors expressed their willingness to worship at this temple.

3.3 A brief history of top Three Buddhist temples

3.3.1 Wat Phra Kaew

The Grand Palace is the residence of the Thai monarch for kings (from Rama I to VIII) of the Bangkok dynasty in Thailand. It covers 218,400 square meters, besides the Chaophraya River, it is Bangkok's most spectacular ancient building. In 1782, at the behest of King Rama I the construction of the Grand Palace began. In 1784, the first palace, Amarin Winitchai Hall was completed, the King Rama I (King Phra Phutthayotfa, 1782-1809) moved into the palace that settled as the official royal residence. After that, successive monarchs of the Chakri dynasty continued with the expansion of the Grand Palace, the decoration was also increasingly ornate to make it reach its present size and grandeur.

Wat Phra Kaew is located in the northeast corner of the Grand Palace of Bangkok, Thailand. It is Thailand's most famous and revered Buddhist temple, one of Thailand's three national treasures (Kivela, 2006). It was built in 1784, as a part of Thailand's Grand Palace, it takes about one fourths of the area of the Grand palace. Wat Phra Kaew is the place for Thailand's royalty to worship the to Emerald Buddha and hold religious ceremonies on important occasions, its actual name is Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram. There are Emerald Buddha Hall, scripture library, clock tower, etc. in the temple (Payutto, 2013).

Regard has it that the Emerald Buddha image was found in a stupa in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1434 (Payutto, 2013). At that time, the Buddha body was

coated with a layer of lime, people thought that it was a clay statue, and later, the lime on the nose of the statue peeled, then a rare Buddha image was found (Kivela, 2006). Since then, the Emerald Buddha was moved several times because of war and it was housed in Laos for 226 years (Payutto, 2013). In 1778, a Thai military expedition led by conquered Vientiane and the Emerald Buddha was brought to a Thai temple to be worshiped. When King Rama I established the new metropolis in Bangkok, the Emerald Buddha was housed in Wat Phra Kaew from 1784 and has been there up until the present (Payutto, 2013).

The Emerald Buddha Hall is the main building of Wat Phra Kaew, the Emerald Buddha is 66 cm high, 48 cm wide, it is carved from a single piece of jasper. Whenever the seasons change, the King of Thailand on his representative provides over a ceremony to change the attire of the Emerald Buddha personally, in order to maintain peace and prosperity for the country (Kivela, 2006). During the ploughing ceremony every year in May, the king also holds religious ceremonies there to pray for good harvests (Frederic, 1965).

3.3.2 Wat Pho

Wat Pho is the second most important temple in Thailand (in terms of importance, Emerald Buddha is the most important in Bangkok). It is situated in Bangkok and close to the Grand Palace. It was probably built in the 17th century in the Ayutthaya period. It underwent major restoration in 1795 during the reign of King Rama I who established the new Chakrit dynasty in Bangkok, and was regarded as the monarch's temple. During the reign of King Rama III (King Nangklao, 1824-1851), another major restoration took place from 1831-41. The King expanded the temple's

ground, decorated the buildings with Chinese ceramic tiles, mural paintings, stone sculptures, wood carvings and mother-of-pearl inlaid works. The King also commissioned the inscription of texts on various subjects on stone plates in different sizes from 32x14 cms to 200x110 cms. The marble, limestone, and slate plates were placed on the exterior and interior walls, windows, posts or wooden beams of 25 buildings. Most of the inscriptions are legible and they are still in good physical condition (Kivela, 2006).

Wat Pho is one of the oldest temples in Thailand, and the huge Reclining Buddha in Wat Pho in Thailand is regarded as a symbol of success, it can bring good luck to those who worship it. For this reason, Wat Pho has a certain status in the world, a number of influential people come to visit the Reclining Buddha and attempt to obtain blessing and good fortune. The current American President Barack Obama is one of the most famous persons who has visited Wat Pho.

In 2012, America's President Barack Obama and the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton chose Wat Pho as the first place for visiting in Thailand. Obama and Hillary Clinton visited the 18th-century monastery accompanied by the abbot wearing his orange robes. When they entered the courtyard of the temple, Obama also followed the Buddhist ritual, taking his shoes off to show respect.

When Obama came to Thailand, financial problems in the U.S. were unresolved, Obama was still worried about whether the country could avoid the "fiscal cliff". During the period of visiting the Thai Royal temple, Wat Pho, Obama respectfully told the Buddhist monks who guided for him that, the country was dealing with its budget problem, which needed a lot of prayer. After that, Obama told

journalists that “I am not joking about the need for prayer. I always believe in prayers, I believe in prayer when I go to church back home, and if a Buddhist monk is wishing me well, I'll take whatever good vibes he can give me to try to deal with some challenges back home.”

3.3.3 Wat Traimit

Wat Traimit is also known as the temple of the Golden Buddha, as it is called by the Chinese in Thailand, it is located in the Chinatown¹¹, near the main train station in Bangkok. It is Thailand's famous temple, one of the most important temples of Thailand. It is said that this temple was built by fund-raising of three Chinese, so it is called the Three Chinese Temple (Evrard and Leepreecha, 2009). Wat Traimit was built in 1832 and named Wat Sam Chin originally, three Chinese donors contributed their properties to build Wat Traimit in 1939. Then, the name was changed into Wat Traimit. In 1956, it earned the status of a royal temple.

In Wat Traimit, there is the world's largest golden Buddha which makes the temple famous. There is a tathagata image casted by pure gold and weighs 5.5 tons, nearly 4 meters high, the distance between the seated cross-legged knees is more than three meters, it is glittering and solemn. It is the art of Thailand's Sukhothai era, it is also a priceless treasure of Thai Buddhism.

In 1954, a new Viharn building was built at the Temple, and it was decided to house the statue there. The statue was moved to its new location in

¹¹ Chinatown in Bangkok is located in the west of downtown, it is one of the city's most bustling business district, it consists of three streets: Sampeng, Yaowarat and Charoen Krung, as well as many alleys. . It is the largest and the most prosperous Chinatown in Southeast Asia.

1955. During the final attempt to lift the statue from its pedestal, the ropes holding the statue broke, and the statue fell down hard on the ground. At that time, some of the plaster coating of the statue chipped off, allowing the gold surface underneath to be seen and providing the evidence that beneath the plaster the statue was gold.

Later, all plaster was carefully removed. In the process, the photos of different stages of plaster removal were taken, and are now displayed in the Temple for visitors. Pieces of the plaster are also on public display. When the plaster was being removed, it was also found that the gold statue actually consists of nine parts that all fit smoothly together.

In Wat Traimit, there are a lot of pagodas and four large towers. The towers are tiled with four-color mosaic, which is extremely magnificent. There are 91 small towers, the small towers are decorated with more gold foil, or studded with colorful ceramic tapes. The largest pagoda is T-shaped and the top is pointing to the sky, which is very spectacular and called Thai-style pagoda (Evrard and Leepreecha, 2009).

In the temple, there are 20 monk statues with various postures. On both sides of the doors of the temple, there are statues which are 3 meters high, there are also 154 relieves carved with stoical paintings during the period of Rama III.

3.3.4 Conclusion

As it can be seen from the above analysis that the three temples have a long history, rich heritage as well as deep religious and cultural significances,

Chinese tourists can enjoy the features of cultures, religions, architectures of different periods when they visit these three temples in Thailand. All in all, a rich heritage and long history is one of the important reasons that attract Chinese tourists to visit the three temples.

3.4 Buddhist temples as tour attractions for Chinese tourists

3.4.1 History of Chinese tourists' visiting temples in Thailand

Before 1978, the Chinese government prohibited ordinary citizens from traveling abroad. After the reform and opening up to discomfit relations in 1978, the Chinese government has gradually relaxed controls on travelling abroad. In 1984, the State Council officially approved the tours to Hong Kong and Macao, which first provided mainland Chinese tourists with opportunities of overseas travel. Travel abroad to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand was opened to ordinary tourists in 1990s, it was the beginning of Chinese people' travelling to Thailand for sightseeing purposes. In early times of Chinese people's travelling to Thailand, their trip route was after s 15-day tour to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, which was purely a sightseeing route. The Chinese people began their large-scale tour to visit temples in Thailand in the late 1990s. In this study, it an operator who began to engage in Chinese tourists' travelling in Thailand in 1990s is interviewed. In this study, it interviews an operator who began to engage in Chinese tourists' travelling in Thailand in 1990s, he pointed out that in 1993, there were about 260,000 Chinese tourists who began to visit Thailand. Before 1995, Chinese tourists mainly went sightseeing in Thailand, after 1995, as Chinese people become more familiar with Thailand, more than 50% of tourists are willing to visit the temples in Thailand. In

their travel arrangements, the travel companies have more and more arrangements for Chinese tourists to visit Thailand's temples, especially the most famous Thai temples, Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit (Evrard and Leepreecha, 2009).

3.4.2 The three temples become tourist destinations

In the past, Wat Phra Kaew was merely the place for the Thai royals to worship the Emerald Buddha statue, as well as perform religious rituals (Payutto, 2013). When King Rama IX of Thailand came to the throne, the royal residence was moved to the Chitralada villa which was about 5 km from the Grand Palace, the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaew became attractions which were open to visitors (Kivela, 2006). Therefore, Wat Phra Kaew is now no longer only a place for royal worship of the Emerald Buddha and holding religious ceremonies, but has also become a favorite tourist destination. Visitors can worship the Emerald Buddha in Wat Phra Kaew, experience the religious culture and appreciate the aesthetic because of religious buildings of Wat Phra Kaew (Payutto, 2013).

Wat Pho is known as a top royal monastery, it is also regarded as the most important monastery during the reign of King Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty. The King managed the restoration of Wat Pho and made Wat Pho a royal monastery which is located close to the Grand Palace. During the two hundred years of its history, Wat Pho, experienced several renovations, the relatively large-scale renovation took place before the Bangkok Bicentennial Celebration in 1982. After that, it became more popular as a sightseeing place attracting large number of tourists.

In 1955, the Golden Buddha was moved to the present Wat Traimit. Since the establishment of Wat Traimit, the temple was known as a model temple by the local government, it is also a pilgrimage destination for Thai and foreign tourists.

3.4.3 The Unique features of Wat Phra Kaew

3.4.3.1 Emerald Buddha

The main building in Wat Phra Kaew is the Emerald Buddha Hall, inside the middle shrine, the Buddha is placed on a 11-meter Buddha platform cast in gold (Diskul and Diskul, 2012). According to Thai tradition, Thai King changes the attire for the Emerald Buddha personally every year (Piriya Krasiksin, 2010). In the hot season, it wears gold clothing with rubies; in the rainy season, it wears gold clothes embroidered with sapphire; in cool season, it wears pure gold clothes. Gold matches with jade, which makes the Emerald Buddha dazzling. Above the Emerald Buddha, there are gold umbrellas which provide protection for the Emerald Buddha, on both sides are crystal balls which represent the sun and the moon. On the front of the Emerald Buddha, there are six bronze lions, guarding the temple gates (Stratton, 2010).



Figure 10 The Emerald Buddha

Sources: <http://www.panix.com/~clay/photo/Thailand/buddhas.html>

3.4.3.2 Mural Painting,

Stunning mural paintings can be found on the walls of Wat Phra Kaew, these were completed during the reign of King Rama I. On the left and right sides of the walls, there are works finished during Rama III, IV. The 178 consecutive murals vividly depict the vivid Ramayana (Ramakien) story of the Thai ancient epic, the murals cover all walls of the cloister, it is up to 1900 m (Piriya Krasiksin, 1980).

The mural tells the story about Rama, the eldest son of King Ayodhya. With the help from his wife, Sita, his brothers, Lakshman and Hanuman, he defeated the demon Ravana, eventually winning the throne.

The legend about Rama is adapted based on the Indian epic “Ramayana”. In this long corridor, tourists will feel that they are walking into a fantasy world formed by traditional Thai literature and craftsmanship. Each mural has Thai inscriptions in poetic form below (Shytor, 1998).



Figure 11 Mural Painting

Sources: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mjaustria>

3.4.3.3 Nine Chedis

On the eastern side of the temple premises there are nine chedis. They were erected during the reign of Rama I. Each chedi is affixed with glazed tiles, with different colours for each chedi, supposed to denote colours of the nine planets.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY



Figure 12 Chedis

Sources: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mjaustria/>

3.4.3.4 The Hermit, Wat Phra Kaew

Entering into The Emerald Buddha Temple, on the western side of the temple, the first thing that visitors notice is a hermit sitting on a rock base with his knee drawn up (Frederic, 1965). The image of The Hermit, Wat Phra Kaew called

Cheewaka Komarapach, was cast in bronze. Regard has it that during the life time of the Buddha was a hermit doctor experienced in preparing traditional herbal medicines and the mortar was his symbol (Stratton, 2010).



Figure 13 Hermits

Sources: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mjaaustria/>

3.4.3.5 The Giants

Standing besides the gate, there are some giants. All Giants around Wat Phra Kaew turn their face to the hall of temple to protect the Emerald Buddha. There are around 12 giants, which come from The Ramayana scene (same story on Mural wall painting).



Figure 14 Giants

Sources: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mjaustria/2250517998/>

The artistic features and tourist attraction of Wat Phra Kaew reflect the features combining elements of Hinduism, Buddhism and animism together (Frederic, 1965). For example, in Wat Phra Kaew, there is Sakyamuni Buddha image, the Buddhists reveres the Buddha image. The mural paintings in Wat Phra Kaew reflect Hindu myth when the Brahma asked Vishnu for help to remove the demon King, Ravana. Three kinds of religious cultures are perfectly integrated and expressed in Wat Phra Kaew, which is one of the reasons why it is widely respected and attractive to tourists (Shytor, 1998).

3.4.4 The Unique features of Wat Pho

3.4.4.1 Reclining Buddha,

The image of the reclining Buddha is 15 meters high and 43 meters long, supports the head with its right arm. The image (3 meters high and 4.5 meters long) of the Buddha are inlaid with mother-of-pearl. They are divided into 108 arranged panels, showing the auspicious symbols by which the Buddha can be recognized such as flowers, dancers, white elephants, tigers and altar accessories (Payutto, 2013). The reclining Buddha is one of the largest Buddha images in Bangkok, it is also one of the three largest reclining Buddhas in Thailand.



Figure 15 Reclining Buddha

Sources: http://www.daodao.com/Attraction_Review-g293916-d311043-Reviews-Temple_of_the_Reclining_Buddha_Wat_Phobangkok.html

3.4.4.2 Traditional Massage and Medicine Pavilion,

Wat Pho is also well known as a centre of traditional medicine. Since the 1960s, it has been considered as the best massage school in Thailand. Highly trained masseurs are on hand to relieve visitors of their aches and pains. It also offers

10- or 15-day massage courses, which are taught in both Thai and English (Nathalang, 2004). Located in the heart of the temple complex, the Medicine Pavilion has stone tablets, indicating the pressure points on the body that should be used during traditional Thai massage (Nathalang, 2004).



Figure 16 Medicine Pavilion

Sources: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_673acbe40101cshz.html

3.4.4.3 Chinese Rock Giant

Aside from the [Reclining Buddha](#) the rockeries and rock giants are Chinese cultural features in Wat Pho that Chinese tourists find fascinating. All Chinese stony or cement rock giants and rockeries found as gate guardians and in the parks are ballasts from the ancient trading travels to China. It is the intelligence of the ancient Thai people to apply this ballast for decorations in many places of this monastery (Nathalang, 2004) Main characters on the ballasts include the rock giants holding weapons and dressed in Chinese opera style costumes, Chinese giants in European attires, political noblemen, Chinese monks, Chinese ladies, philosophers, animals, and so on.



Figure 17 Rock Giant

Sources: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_673acbe40101cshz.html

Rock Giant with weapons represents nobleman warriors in Chinese opera style clothing (Sujachaya and Sukanya, 1999). The giant with a fierce-face looking downward, holding a weapon in hand and wearing a tight suit of armour can be found as gate guardians. They are both high-rank soldiers and combatants (Nathalang, 2004).



Figure 18 Ballasts

Sources: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_673acbe40101cshz.html

3.4.5 The Unique features of Wat Traimit

3.4.5.1 The Golden Buddha

The gold Buddha statue is 3 meters (9.8 ft) tall and weighs 5.5 tons (5.4 long tons; 6.1 short tons). Before the mid-19th century, the statue was housed in Ayutthaya, and its provenance from Ayutthaya excludes the possibility of it having been made after about 1750 (Nathalang, 2004). A peculiar feature of the statue is that it can be reassembled into 9 pieces. From the base up to the neck, the purity of gold is 40%, it is 80% from the chin to the forehead and 99% for the hair and the topknot. It weighs 45 kg (Nathalang, 2004).



Figure 19 Golden Buddha

Sources: <http://www.tour-bangkok-legacies.com/wat-traimit.html.jpg>

3.4.5.2 Two museums: Phra Buddha Maha Suwana Patimakorn Exhibition and Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre

There are two museums in Wat Traimit, one is named Phra Buddha Maha Suwana Patimakorn Exhibition. The museum is about the history of the Golden Buddha and how the golden Buddha statues were established. In a case, the old pulley and ropes used for hoisting the Golden Buddha on that fateful day (25 May 1955) are preserved here. Another interesting historical snippet in this museum is a copy of the 1991 Guinness Book of Records which records the Golden Buddha as a “sacred object with the highest intrinsic value of £21.1 million. This valuation is on the basis of the gold price in April 1990 at £227 per fine ounce.



Figure 20 The Making of Phra Buddha Maha Suwanna Patimakorn

Sources: <http://www.eugenegoesthailand.com/?p=10640>

The other museum is Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre. The Yaowarat Heritage Centre on the one hand covers the history of the early Chinese immigrants to Bangkok, their integration into Thai society and the growth of Chinatown Bangkok with Yaowarat Road as the main thoroughfare. On the other hand, it displays the friendship between Thai people and Chinese people, thus there are many Chinese people who go to visit the museum (Nathalang, 2004).



Figure 21 The Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre

3.5 The significance of the top three temples for Chinese Tourists

There are more than 30,000 temples in Thailand, Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho and Wat Traimit are three treasured temples in the country. Each temple has a long history, unique architectural style and religious cultural landscape. The architectures and Buddha statues in Thai temples show different characteristics and witnessed historical changes when they were in different dynastic eras. Thus, according to the Buddha statues, it can be judged when the temples were established. They attracted Thai people as well as tourist destinations for many tourists from other countries (Kivela, 2006).

Thai temples have many social functions, for example, they can be places for conducting religious rituals and ceremonies, they can also used as a place for monks' practicing. Thai temples are also the places to display historical artifacts and receive tourists and foreign guests. Ancient Thai temples also assumed the responsibility of hospitals and schools. Today, Thai temples also bear part of social

functions of charity, such as adoption of the elderly, orphans, and so on (Kivela, 2006).

The main purpose of Chinese tourists' visiting temples in Thailand is sightseeing, other motivations also include experiencing Thai Buddhist culture. The purpose of a small number of Chinese tourists is worshipping. The long history of cultures of temples in Thailand and the magnificent buildings of the temples are indeed able to meet these motivations of Chinese tourists largely. Judging from the perspective of sightseeing, enjoying architecture, statues and murals of Thai temples are Chinese tourists' favorite activities in travelling (Hou, 2013).

Judging from the perspective of sightseeing, enjoying architecture, statues and murals of Thai temples are Chinese tourists' favorite activities in travelling (Hou, 2013).

From the perspective of experiencing Buddhist culture, Thailand temples have a long history, architecture, mural, inscriptions in temples show visitors Thai Buddhist culture. For example, pillars and walls in Wat Pho were carved with inscriptions, the content is about the history of establishment of the temple, the history of Buddhism and health knowledge. Therefore, Chinese tourists can indeed have a very good understanding and experience of Thai Buddhist culture in temples in Thailand (Hou, 2013).

Considering from the perspective of worship, a small number of Chinese tourists were Buddhists, they believed in Buddhism, they believed that worshipping in Thai temples could help them to achieve their aspirations (Hou, 2013).

All in all, the significance of visiting the three major temples in Thailand is that it meets the needs of Chinese tourists' for sightseeing, experiencing Thai culture and worshipping.

3.6 The construction of top three Hinduism shrines in Central Bangkok

There are six well-known Hindu shrines in Thailand: there are the Erawan Shrine, the Indra Shrine, the Ganesh Shrine, the Narayana Shrine, the Goddess Lakshimi Shrine and the Trimurti Shrine.

3.6.1 The Erawan Shrine

The Erawan Shrine is a [Hindu shrine](#) in [Bangkok](#), Thailand, that houses a statue of [Phra Phrom](#), the Thai representation of the Hindu creation god [Brahma](#). A popular tourist attraction, it often features performances by resident [Thai dance](#) troupes, who are hired by worshippers in return for seeing their prayers at the shrine answered. The shrine is located by the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel. The area has many major shopping malls nearby, including Gaysorn, [CentralWorld](#) and Amarin Plaza.



Figure 22 Erawan Shrine

3.6.2 The Indra Shrine

This Shrine houses the image of the Hindu God, Indra who is in concept the supreme ruler of all the Gods. The statue is made of dark jade and is located some 80 meters east from The Erawan Shrine in front of the building called Amarin Plaza. Indra is regarded as the Diety that looks after mankind.



Figure 23 Indra Shrine

3.6.3 The Narayana Shrine

It is in front of InterContinental Bangkok and erected in 1997, this striking statue of Lord Narayana, the God of Mercy, protects local businesses and all worshippers. To make a wish, offer fresh marigold garlands, textiles or Thai desserts with all specious sounding names like tong-yod.



Figure 24 Narayana Shrine

3.6.4 The Goddess Lakshmi Statue

It is on the 4th floor of Gaysorn Plaza. Lakshmi, the Goddess of luck, wealth and fertility, is Lord Narayana's consort. She is revered for her beauty. To make a wish in her open air, above-ground shrine, people offer dark pink lotus blossoms, sugar cane or coins and other symbols of wealth.



Figure 25 Goddess Lakshmi Statue

3.6.5 The Trimurti Shrine

This shrine includes the three pillars of Hindu Gods, Brahma the Creator, Shiva the Destroyer and Vishnu the Preserver. The image is in bronze and is gold plated.



Figure 26 Trimurti Shrine

3.6.6 The Lord Ganesh Shrine

Ganesh is another Hindu Diety. He has the head of an elephant and the body of a fat human male. The Image here is in bronze and is gold plated. Elsewhere in Bangkok images of Lord Ganesh can be seen where the arts, education and media activities are located. This is because Lord Ganesh as the diety of good fortune and the remover of obstacles is associated with trade, arts and education. His image appears on the emblem of the Ministry of Fine Arts.



Figure 27 Ganesh Shrine

Among the six shrine shrines, Erawan Shrine, Trimurti Shrine and Ganesh Shrine are the most well-known for Chinese tourists, this thesis mainly describes the background information on these three shrines.

3.6.7 Reasons for establishment of the three shrines

Erawan Shrine was established in 1956, it is a famous tourist attraction in Bangkok, there are a lot of people who visit there every day. The reason for the construction of Erawan Shrine can be explained as follow. Many years ago, Thailand's most luxurious hotel at that time would be built there. After funding was made possible through the efforts of many parties, work started on the construction the hotel, but not long after that a spate of incidents happened, for example, several workers lost their lives in mysterious accidents, the progress of the construction was not very smooth. Meanwhile, accidents occurred frequently in the crossing.

One day, a monk was passing by and seeing this project, he suggested that, to solve the successive problems, a deity needed to be invoked. The general manager asked the monk, what they should invoke. The monk suggested Erawan. Then, they went to India and invoked Erawan, placed the Erawan Shrine in front of the hotel, from then on, everything worked smoothly, the hotel was completed soon after, opened, and business was also booming (Keyes, 2006). After that, the fame of Erawan Shrine spread and a lot of people came to visit, and some visitors traveled to Thailand many times for making a vow to Erawan Shrine.

According to Lim's (2014) analysis, Trimurti Shrine was established in 1989. The shrine is a landmark in front of Central World shopping center. Ganesh Shrine is directly adjacent to Trimurti. Trimurti Shrine is mainly in charge of human love. Ganesh Shrine is mainly in charge of wealth. This two shrines were mainly established for geomancy, people want to bring good luck and avoid bad things through the establishment of these two shrines. And because these two shrines were established in front of Central World, they can also bless the booming business of the shopping mall. (Wilson, 2008; whittaker, 2012).

Moreover, Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine were built besides the gate of the Central World. This mall was built on land that was a palace before. When the mall was completed, there were many accidents, people felt that it was unlucky, as this place was cursed and disaster, fire, or death happened frequently. People wanted to bring luck and exempt disaster by establishing this two shrines, so as to bless the booming development of the mall. While these two shrines were built on the opposite of Erawan Shrine, which also has fengshui reasons, because Hindu

shrines have a protective function. If one is erected on the opposite side of the road to direct unwanted influences away, it is somehow advised to construct its own shrine, otherwise these negative forces might arrive at its property.

3.7 Reasons for Erawan Shrine, Ganesh Shrine, Trimurti Shrine as top 3 shrines for Chinese tourists

3.7.1 Erawan Shrine

The Erawan Shrine does not belong to Buddhism but Hinduism. People from Chinese mainland are not familiar with Hinduism, about why today there are many people from mainland Chinese who are willing to visit Erawan Shrine, there are deep historical reasons. People from Chinese mainland did not know Erawan Shrine at the beginning, the majority of them began to worship Erawan Shrine after 2000. Erawan Shrine was through four stages to affect Chinese people from different areas of the world. First of all, it impacted Chinese in Thailand, followed by Chinese in Southeast Asia and Chinese in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and ultimately it attracted people in Chinese mainland (Whittaker, 2012).

The Erawan Shrine was established in 1956, and since then it has attracted many worshippers and it soon acquired more significance than most other shrines. Because so many ordinary people came to believe that they gained spiritual assistance by making offerings at the shrine. The influence of Erawan Shrine has been expanded, which was related to a series of legendary stories about Erawan Shrine. There was a story that a girl once vowed at the shrine, she said that as long as she won the grand price in the lottery in, she would dance nakedly at the shrine. Later, she really won the lottery, and she really kept her promise at the shrine. This big

news was sensationalized by the Thai newspapers, making the fame of Erawan Shrine widespread (Keyes, 2006).

In the first stage, Chinese descendants in Thailand came to worship the Erawan Shrine, they wished that it could help them to realize their dreams (Whittaker, 2012). In the second stage, with the growing influence of the Erawan Shrine, Chinese in Southeast Asia began to pay homage to the Erawan Shrine. In the third stage, with the dissemination of media in Thailand and Chinese people in Southeast Asia, the influence of the Erawan Shrine was extended to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, many film stars, businessmen from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao have become the faithful worshippers of Erawan Shrine, they traveled by plane to come to worship Erawan Shrine. Famous stars from Hong Kong who once worshiped Erawan Shrine included Deborah Lee, Nicholas Tse, Joey Yung, and so on. Large-scale Chinese from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan worshiped Erawan Shrine in 1999. On the ninth day of September in 1999, 2,000 Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Macau came together at the shrine for a very special ceremony to "open the eyes" of a replica of the statue which was to be installed in Taipei (Whittaker, 2012).

In the fourth stage, after 2000, with the arrival of a large number of Chinese people to Thailand, a large scale of publicity of travel agents for Erawan Shrine, and the propaganda from people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, especially the impact brought by the worship of famous stars from Hong Kong in Erawan Shrine calling the impact of Erawan Shrine to be expanded to the Chinese mainland. Many Chinese tour groups will arrange tourists to visit the Erawan Shrine. Through

interviewing an operator from a travel agency, it was learned that considering the tourist routes that they designed for Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand, 75% -80% of the routes covered visiting the Erawan Shrine, because Erawan Shrine is one of the most famous attractions for tourist groups from China. Before they came to Thailand, many Chinese people gathered relevant information about Erawan Shrine, including when Erawan Shrine was established, why it was formed, and what happened with Erawan Shrine, etc. They worshiped Erawan Shrine for it is a responsive shrine, they wanted to worship Erawan Shrine to achieve their goals, some other people want to experience local religious culture through worshipping Erawan Shrine.

3.7.2 Trimurti Shrine and Ganesh Shrine

Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine were established later than Erawan Shrine, they are also less famous than Erawan Shrine, therefore there are relatively less Chinese tourists who know the two shrines. As these two shrines are located beside the entrance of Central World, while Central World is Thailand's landmark building, a large number of Chinese tourists will notice the two shrines when they visit Central World (Wilson, 2008; Whittaker, 2012). At the same time, in order to attract Chinese tourists, travel agencies vigorously take advantages of advertisement to publicize the two shrines, making a lot of Chinese tourists know the two shrines (Wilson, 2008; Whittaker, 2012). However, compared with Erawan Shrine, there are fewer Chinese tourists who visit the two shrines. By interviewing an operator¹², it was found that 20% of their tour arrangement included the two shrines, because there are not as famous as Erawan Shrine, Chinese tourists were less willing to visit the

¹² A local operator in Bangkok, Thailand, he has been in charge of receiving Chinese tourists for ten years, he was interviewed in a travel agency in Bangkok, Thailand.

shrines. In interview with a tour guide¹³, he said, “Chinese tourists less visited Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine than Erawan Shrine, as the two shrines are close to Central world, many visitors still noticed them, about 20 percent of Chinese tourists would visited them when they went to Central World.

3.8 Chinese tourists’ visiting top three shrines

3.8.1 Erawan Shrine

The Erawan Hotel Brahma Shrine Fund has been set up long ago with the money from donations and offerings part of the fee paid to the dancers and even the reselling of the wooden elephants that have been consecrated to the Lord Brahma. From the opening of the shrine in 1956 up to the year 2002, a total of 550 million baht had been collected. An example of how the fund is put to good use is that part of the money has been donated to more than 300 hospitals all over the country to purchase modern medical equipment. The Erawan Hotel Brahma Shrine Fund is one of the religious organizations in Thailand which has received the most contribute money, it can be seen that Erawan Shrine has large influence in Thailand. Therefore, mostly Chinese tourists know Erawan Shrine.

In 2000, a large-scale of tourists from Chinese mainland began to go to Thailand to visit Erawan Shrine, Erawan Shrine has been chosen by more and more Chinese travel agencies as a travel destination. Even today, about 80 percent of travel agencies in China and Thailand list Erawan Shrine in their travel routes. The reason for why Erawan Shrine has been recognized by the majority of Chinese

¹³ A local guide in Bangkok, Thailand, she has been in charge of receiving Chinese tourists for two years, she was interviewed in a travel agency in Bangkok, Thailand.

tourists mainly lies in its reputation as a responsive shrine, its reputation is widespread in mainland China, which is due to the following reasons. Firstly, there are many stories and legends about the Erawan Shrine as a responsive shrine, coupled with the dissemination of Chinese and Thai media, which makes the Erawan Shrine the most famous shrine in Thailand, thus Chinese people living in Thailand and Southeast Asia began to understand and worship Erawan Shrine (Keyes, 2006). Secondly, with the development of China's economy, Chinese living in Thailand, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan strengthened contact with Chinese mainland, when they conducted trade and exchanges with Chinese mainland, allowing people from the Chinese mainland to understand Erawan Shrine, especially famous stars' worshipping Erawan Shrine has been widely reported by China's television media and paper media, which expanded the visibility of Erawan Shrine. Thirdly, more and more Chinese tourists have come to Thailand for tourism, Tour groups in China and Thailand gave publicity to Erawan Shrine for the purpose of attracting Chinese tourists. Many websites and tourist brochures, magazines have introductions about Erawan Shrine, making Chinese tourists have a good understanding about Erawan Shrine as a responsive shrine, many Chinese tourists want to travel to visit Erawan Shrine. Fourthly, many visitors from East Asian including tourists from Chinese mainland have been conspicuous in their seeking supernatural assistance to overcome the risks they confront. When the reputation of Erawan Shrine has been understood by tourists from Chinese mainland, a large number of Chinese tourists have a strong willingness to visit Erawan Shrine. Finally, Erawan Shrine has a good reputation, but it is worth noting that there is a part of Chinese people who do not wish to fulfill their promise through worshipping Erawan Shrine,

because they are not religious believers, they only take Erawan Shrine as a great tour destination, they want to experience Thai religious culture by visiting the Erawan Shrine (Wilson, 2008; Whittaker, 2012).

Chinese tourists comply with local rituals and ceremonies when they visit Erawan Shrine in Thailand. For example, first of all, they wash their hands with the holy water, or sprinkling to head, according to a clockwise direction and start from the front entrance to worship each side with three sticks of incense, a candles, a garland of jasmine flowers; if they pray at the moment and the wish would be achieved one day, they must come back to worship Erawan Shrine for fulfilling the promise. Votive way is usually worshiping each side with three sticks of incense, a candle, seven strings of jasmine, a wood elephant, coupled with what they have promised as votive way, such as donating, releasing, or inviting dance group to perform Lakhon Chatree to show thanks to Erawan Shrine.

3.8.2 Trimurti Shrine and Ganesh Shrine

As Trimurti Shrine and Ganesh Shrine are not as famous as Erawan Shrine, Chinese tourists began to visit them later, which was about the year of 2000. Chinese tourists know the two shrines as they are in front of Central World. When Chinese tourists visit Central World, they will notice the two shrines (Wilson, 2008; Whittaker, 2012). Dissemination about the two shrines by tour agencies in China also contributes to Chinese tourists' reasons for visiting the two shrines. Part of Chinese tourists' visiting the two shrines for Trimurti Shrine is in charge of human love, Ganesh Shrine is mainly in charge of wealth, Chinese tourists want to achieve their desire to get love and wealth by paying homage to them. Then, through worshiping

them, Chinese tourists can also experience Thai culture. Chinese tourists also follow local customs in Thailand to worship the two shrines, when Chinese tourists worship Trimurti Shrine, red roses and red candles will be dedicated to Trimurti Shrine. In worshipping the Ganesh Shrine, Chinese tourists will offer models of elephants, fresh marigold garlands, sweets, bananas and sugar cane, and so on. All of these things needed for worship can be acquired easily near the shrines.

3.9 The significance of the top three shrines for Chinese Tourists

3.9.1 Erawan Shrine

Whittaker (2012) analyzes, that in Taiwan and Hong Kong, middle class and wealthy people who are deeply enmeshed in capitalist enterprises have been conspicuous in their seeking supernatural assistance to overcome the risks they confront, the significance of the Erawan Shrine is not only for urban Thai and especially Sino-Thai but also for many people from Chinese mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Therefore, for a large number of Chinese tourists, they visit the Erawan Shrine mainly for it is a responsive shrine, they hope to worship the Erawan Shrine to seek spiritual support, so as to achieve their aspirations. While the reason for a considerable tourists' visiting the Erawan Shrine is that they have visited the Erawan Shrine before and promised before the Erawan Shrine. When the promises came true, they came to worship the Erawan Shrine again for fulfilling the promises. In this paper, it was through interviewing some tourists and tour guides to understand Chinese tourists' motivations of visiting the Erawan Shrine.

There were a large number of Chinese tourists who came to visit the Erawan Shrine every year, most of them came to seek supernatural assistance and a

considerable number of them did not want to achieve their aspirations through worshipping the Erawan Shrine, because they were not religious believers. Chinese tourists of this part visited the Erawan Shrine, but they were not concerned about whether the Erawan Shrine could help them to reach goals, what they paid more attention to was experiencing religious culture in the process of worshipping the Erawan Shrine. The Erawan Shrine is significant for Chinese tourists, first of all, it meets the aspirations of Chinese tourists' seeking for spiritual help. Then, it satisfies Chinese tourists' demand of experiencing local religion and culture.

3.9.2 Trimurti Shrine

Trimurti refers to three forms of god, it is also known as Hindu Trinity, it is an iconographic representation of god in Hinduism, which depicts divinity as a three faced figure. These three faces represent god's roles of creation, preservation and destruction, which are associated with Brahma (the source or creator), Vishnu (the preserver or indwelling-life), and Shiva (the destroyer and transformer) respectively (Whittaker, 2012).

At the beginning, Trimurti Shrine was built for seeking money, rather than bringing love to believers. Considering from a business point of view, it's not good if the powerful Brahma faces the World Trade Centre, so World Trade Centre built Trimurti Shrine to resist Brahma's power, so as to ensure its booming business. Thus many believers come to seek wealth and winning lottery and so on. The shrine somehow acquired a reputation of granting happiness in romance, as it's very popular with young Thais who associate the shrine with the god of love.

Legends build upon themselves and as the fame of the shrine grew, so did the flock of faithful. Such is the renown of the shrine that it's sometimes referred to as the Lovers' Shrine. When Chinese people go to the Central World for shopping, they inadvertently see the shrine, the tour guides and travel agencies also introduce it as the god of love to Chinese tourists, thus Chinese people have always thought that this is the god of love. Now, the shrine is wildly accepted as the god of love (Lim, 2014).

Trimurti is looked on as the supreme god due to the merger of three divine powers. And recently, Trimurti has become widely revered among young people as the god of love. Devotees believe that Trimurti descends from heaven to the earth on Tuesday and Thursday at around 21:30 to hear their prayers and favor-seeking. The Valentine's Day make it an auspicious opportunity for people to take their sweetheart out to pray at the shrine. For best results, believers should not forget to make offerings of nine red incense sticks, red candles, red roses and fruits (Whittaker, 2012).

Trimurti is cast in bronze and it is gold plated, it is the god of love in Thailand, it has been the favorite of many young people in Thailand. After years of propaganda, Trimurti has a growing reputation in China, many Chinese young people and even famous stars come to Thailand to visit Trimurti, for example, Chinese star such as Jin Qiaoqiao came to Thailand to worship Trimurti, she prayed to Trimurti for her love. Trimurti has a growing influence in China, the reasons lie in the following areas. Firstly, love is a topic that Chinese people are very concerned about, almost every Chinese young people are eager to be able to gain a satisfactory love, so they

are very interested in Trimurti relating to love. Secondly, in China, there is a lack of a deep religious image which is similar to Trimurti, in the process of falling in love, once Chinese young people have a problem, they cannot find such a Bodhisattva to help them, and Trimurti just makes up such a defect. Thirdly, some Chinese people visit the Trimurti Shrine for curiosity for Thai culture, they are not concerned about whether the Trimurti Shrine can really bring true love, they are more interested in observing the process of Thais' and tourists' visiting the Trimurti Shrine to understand religious culture in Thailand to gain a unique travel experience (Hou, 2013).

Of course, there were still some older Chinese tourists who were interested in visiting the Trimurti Shrine for they were interested in the local culture in Thailand. They wanted to see how the local youth worshiped the Trimurti Shrine, as Chinese tourists in China seldom found young man worship with red roses as what was done in Thailand (Hou, 2013).

Overall, the main significance of Trimurti Shrine for Chinese tourists is to meet Chinese tourists' needs to get spiritual help, while Trimurti Shrine can also meet Chinese visitors' demands of experiencing the unique local culture in Thailand.

3.9.3 Ganesh Shrine

The son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesh has an elephantine countenance with a curved trunk and big ears, and a huge pot-bellied body of a human being. He is the Lord of success and destroyer of evils and obstacles. He is also worshipped as the god of education, knowledge, wisdom and wealth. In fact, Ganesh is one of the five prime Hindu deities (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Durga being the other four)

whose idolatry is glorified as the Panchayatana Puja (Andrea whittaker,2012).

For Thai people, Ganesh is an important god. In Thailand, Ganesh is known as Phra Phikanet or Phra Phikanesuan. It is the symbol of removing obstacles. Ganesh is regarded and is worshipped as the god of fortune and success. He is also related to arts, education and trade. Ganesh can be found in the emblem of the Department of Fine Arts in Thailand, which is the same as in Indonesia, many education institutions use Ganesh as a symbol (Andrea Whittaker, 2012).

Ganesh is the son of Shiva and Parvati. He has a high status among the gods, he is also the god of wealth in Hinduism, he can help people to achieve their desire for wealth, thus he is loved and respected by many Thai believers (Andrea whittaker,2012). China has a history of several centuries for worshipping the god of wealth, and today Chinese people's worship of the god of wealth is more prevalent, the god of wealth that Chinese people worship is almost all over the world. Thus Chinese people like to visit Ganesh in Thailand to received blessings, in order to achieve the aspirations in terms of wealth, the fame of Ganesh is increasingly growing among tourists from China. Usually some Chinese tourists who travel in Thailand will come to visit Ganesh in order to obtain his blessing. Besides, some people worshiped Ganesh Shrine for curiosity for Thai culture. They were not really very interested in whether Ganesh Shrine could bring wealth. They were more interested in observing the process of how Thais and tourists worshiped Ganesh Shrine, understanding the religious culture in Thailand, so as to gain a unique travel experience (Hou, 2013). All in all, Ganesh Shrine has the significance of two aspects for Chinese tourists, one is to

meet Chinese tourists' motivation of seeking spiritual support on wealth. The other is to meet the motivation of Chinese tourists' experiencing Thai culture.

3.10 Conclusion

Three treasured temples in Thailand attract Chinese tourists to visit with their unique religions, cultures and architectural features. They satisfy to Chinese tourists' demands for sightseeing, experiencing Thai culture and worship. Three shrines in Thailand meet the motivations of Chinese tourists' seeking spiritual support and experiencing Thai culture.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction of this chapter

In this study, both quantitative research and qualitative research methods are used. Questionnaires have been used to conduct quantitative research. Questionnaire allows the researcher to collect a large number of samples in a short time, which is conducive to understanding the views of many people on an issue in a short time, as well as saving manpower, time and money. However, it is worth noting that the questionnaire also has its weak point, for example, it only provides access to written social information, and it cannot provide an understanding of the cause and background of a problem. This is its biggest drawback

Interview is a basic research method that is through a face to face conversation between interviewers and respondents to understand the psychology and behavior of the respondents. Through interview, it can have a more detailed understanding of the content of a deeper level. Compared with questionnaire, interview costs more time, manpower and material resources. As interview is costly, time-consuming, interview of a large sample size is difficult to be carried out, in general, the sample size of an interview is small. In this study, the combination of questionnaire and interview is conducive to their strengths to compensate for their disadvantages, making the research results more reliable and true. This chapter describes the results of the questionnaires and the interviews conducted for this study.

4.2 Results of the questionnaire

4.2.1 Basic information

In this investigation, 300 copies of questionnaires were distributed to Chinese tourists from mainland China through inbound travel agencies which specialize in Chinese tourists by a random sampling method, and 255 copies were returned, the rate of recovery was up to 85%, of which 214 copies were valid questionnaires, the rate of available questionnaires reached 84%. Among the respondents, there were 137 males and 77 females; 115 respondents were married and 79 respondents were unmarried, 20 respondents did not mention this for the protection of personal privacy. In terms of the educational background of the respondents, 27 respondents have received education of a primary level, 31 people have an access to education of a secondary level, 67 respondents have received college education, 89 persons have received university education. Considering their ages, 16 respondents were less than 20 years old, 89 respondents were 20-40-years-old. 55 respondents were 40-60 years old. 54 respondents were more than 60 years old. Judging from their occupations, 87 respondents worked as general employees, 45 people were employers, 54 respondents were students and other 28 people took other occupations. Considering their monthly income, 43 respondents earned less than 15,000 baht monthly, 117 people earned a monthly income of 15,000-25,000 baht, 30 people acquired a monthly income of 25,000 to 35,000 baht, 24 people got a monthly income of more than 35,000 baht. Among the respondents, 31 of them were Buddhist, 26 were Christians, 13 were Muslims, 125 were non-believers, other 19 respondents believed in other religions. Among the respondents of the questionnaires, there were 145 respondents who have been to Thailand for 1-3

times, 46 respondents have been to Thailand for 3-5 times, 23 respondents have been to Thailand for more than five times, 41 respondents have never been to Thailand, questionnaires of respondents of this part were treated as invalid questionnaires, the results of these questionnaires would not analyzed and discussed in this study. Among the respondents of the questionnaire, there were at least 214 respondents who have been to one of the following places in Thailand, such as Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, Erawan Shrine, Trimurti Shrine, Ganesha Shrine once, there were 41 respondents who have never been to the six spots, so questionnaires of the respondents of this part were treated as invalid questionnaires, the results of the questionnaires in this study would not be analyzed and discussed. Background information of investigated objects is shown in Appendix II.

Table 1 Basic Information of the Respondents (N/A refers to nullifidian)

Gender	Male		Female		
Number of respondents	137		77		
Marital status	Married	Unmarried		Unknown	
Number of respondents	115	79		20	
Educational background	Primary education	Secondary education	College education	University education	
Number of respondents	27	31	67	89	
Age	Below 20	20-40	40-60	Above 60	
Number of respondents	16	89	55	54	
Occupation	General employee	Employer	Students	Others	
Number of respondents	87	45	54	28	
Monthly income	Below ฿ 15,000	฿15,000 to ฿ 25,000	฿25,000 to ฿ 35,000	Above ฿ 35,000	
Number of respondents	43	117	30	24	
Times of having been to Thailand	1-3	3-5	More than 5 times	Never	
Number of respondents	145	46	23	41	
Religious beliefs	Buddhism	Christianity	Islam	N/A	Other religions
Number of respondents	31	26	13	125	19

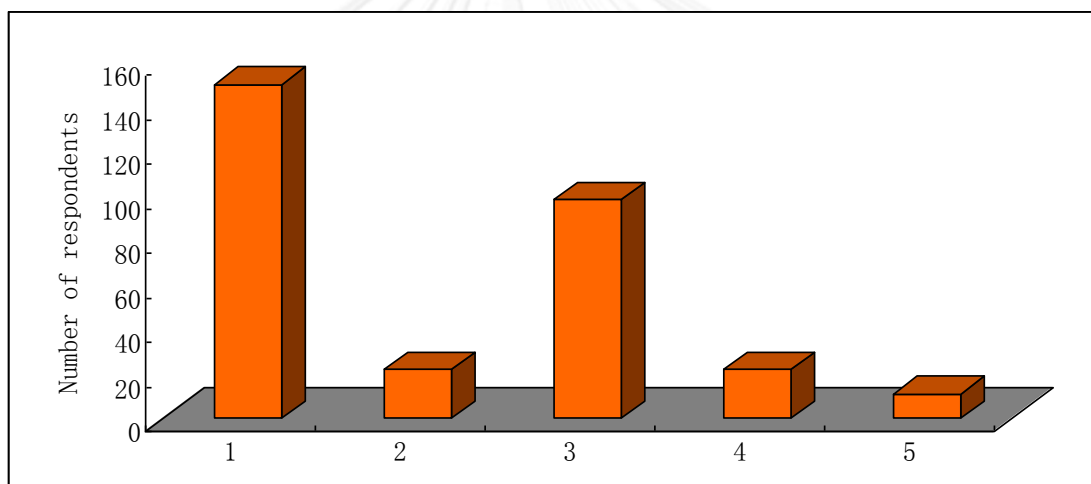
4.2.2 Through what channels did you have an access to information about religious attractions in Thailand?

There were 98 respondents who said that they had accessed the information from the introduction provided by travel agents to understand the religious sites in Thailand, accounting for 45% of the total number; there were 22 respondents who showed that they found information through newspapers and magazines to understand religious sites in Thailand, accounting for 10% of the total number; there are 150 respondents who said that they had used the internet to learn more about the religious attractions in Thailand, accounting for 70% of the total number; there are 22 respondents who said that they found TV show that introduced tourism to understand religious spots in Thailand, accounting for 10% of the total number. Other 11 respondents said that they found other ways to acquire information about religious sites in Thailand, accounting for 5% of the total number.

Judging from the results of the questionnaire, the largest number of respondents received introduction provided by network to understand the religious sites in Thailand, accounting for 70% of the total number. The number of respondents who found information from travel agencies to understand Thailand's religious sites was the second largest, accounting for 45% of the total number. The number of respondents who used the TV, newspapers and magazines to learn about the religious sites in Thailand was the third largest, accounting for 10% of the total number. The number of respondents who went through other channels to understand religious sites in Thailand was the least, accounting for 5% of the total number of the respondents.

Table 2 Results of Question 1

Items	Network	Newspapers and magazines	Information provided by travel agencies	TV	Other channels
Number of respondents	150	22	98	22	11
Percentage	70%	10%	45%	10%	5%

**Figure 28** Results of Question 2

1: Network

2: Newspapers and magazines

3: Information provided by travel agencies

4: TV

5: Other channels

4.2.2 Which religious sites did you visit in Bangkok most?

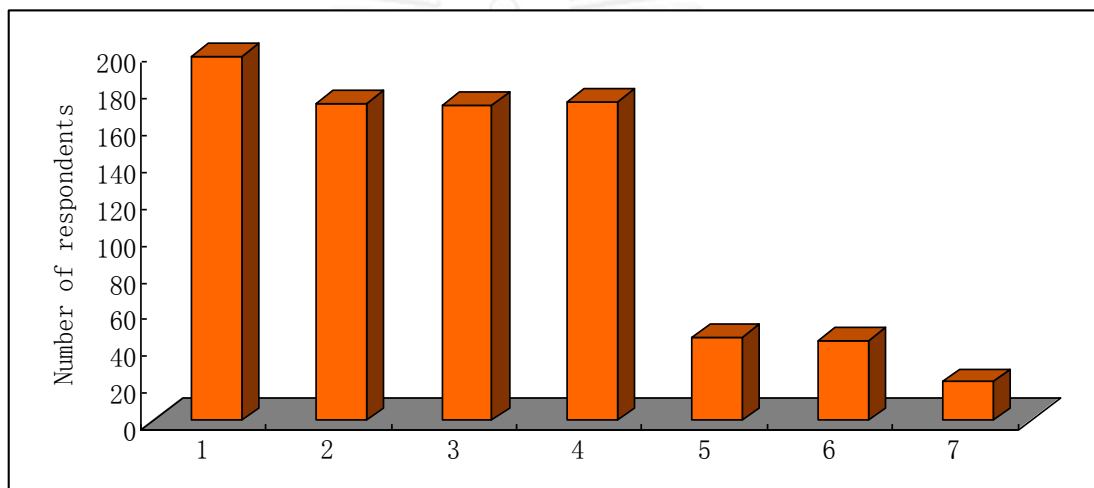
The results of the questionnaire indicated that, there were 198 respondents who chose Wat Phra Kaew for visiting most, accounting for 93% of the total number of the respondents. 112 respondents chose Wat Pho, accounting for 52 % of the total number. 111 respondents chose Wat Traimit, accounting for 52% of the total number. 173 respondents chose Erawan Shrine, accounting for 81% of the total number. 45 respondents chose Trimurti Shrine, accounting for 21% of the total number. 43 respondents chose Ganesha Shrine, accounting for 20% of the total number, 21 respondents chose other places as the destinations, accounting for 10% of the total number of respondents.

The number of respondents who chose Wat Phra Kaew was the largest. The number of respondents who chose Erawan Shrine was the second, the number of respondents who chose Wat Pho and Wat Traimit was the third.

The number of the respondents who chose Trimurti Shrine as the destination was the fourth largest, accounting for 21% of the total number. The number of the respondents who chose Ganesha Shrine was the fifth largest, accounting for 20% of the total number, the number of the respondents who chose other places was the least, accounting for 10% of the total number.

Table 3 Results of Question 2

Item	Wat Phra Kaew,	Wat Pho	Wat Traimit	Erawan Shrine ,	Trimurti Shrine	Ganesha Shrine	Other
Number of respondents	198	112	111	173	45	43	21
Percentage	93 %	52%	52%	81%	21%	20%	10%

**Figure 29** Results of Question 6

1: *Wat Phra Kaew,*

2: *Wat Pho*

3: *Wat Traimit*

4: *Erawan Shrine ,*

5: *Trimurti Shrine*

6: *Ganesha Shrine*

7: *Other places*

4.2.3 What is your motivation of going to visit temples and shrines in Thailand?

Table 4 Results of Question 3

Item	Making a pilgrimage	Appealing for good luck	Understanding Thailand's religion and culture	Appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand	Relaxing and relieving pressure	Other motives
Wat Pra Kaew	21	78	141	137	55	21
Wat Pho	20	77	143	132	45	21
Wat Traimit	19	78	135	132	31	18
Erawan Shrine	22	181	65	31	41	22
Trimurti Shrine	12	33	56	41	32	43
Ganesh Shrine	12	39	59	41	29	41
Total	106	486	599	514	213	166

There were 599 person-times holding the motivation of understanding Thailand's religion and culture, the number was the largest; 514 person-times holding the motivation of appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand, the number was the second; 486 person-times holding the motivation of appealing for good luck, the number was the third; 213 person-times have the motivation of relaxing and relieving pressure, the number was the fourth; 166 person-times have other motives, the number was the fifth; 106 person-times holding the motivation of making a pilgrimage, the number was the sixth.

Among Chinese tourists who have been to Wat Pra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, the number of tourists who have the motivation of understanding Thailand's religion and culture was the largest; the number of tourists who have the motivation of appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand was the second; the number of tourists who have the motivation of appealing for good luck was the third; the number of tourists who have the motivation of relaxing and relieving pressure was the fourth; the number of tourists who have other motivations was the fifth; the number of tourists who have the motivation of making a pilgrimage was the sixth.

Among Chinese tourists who have been to Erawan Shrine, the number of tourists who have the motivation of appealing for good luck was the largest; the number of tourists who have the motivation of understanding Thailand's religion and culture was the second; the number of tourists who have the motivation of relaxing and relieving pressure was the third; the number of tourists who have the motivation of appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand was the fourth; the number of tourists who have other motivations was the fifth; the number of tourists who have

the motivation of making a pilgrimage was the sixth.

Among Chinese tourists who have been to Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, the number of tourists who have the motivation of understanding Thailand's religion and culture was the largest; the number of tourists who have the motivation of appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand was the second; the number of tourists who have the motivation of appealing for good luck was the third; the number of tourists who have the motivation of relaxing and relieving pressure was the fourth; the number of tourists who have other motivations was the fifth; the number of tourists who have the motivation of making a pilgrimage was the sixth.

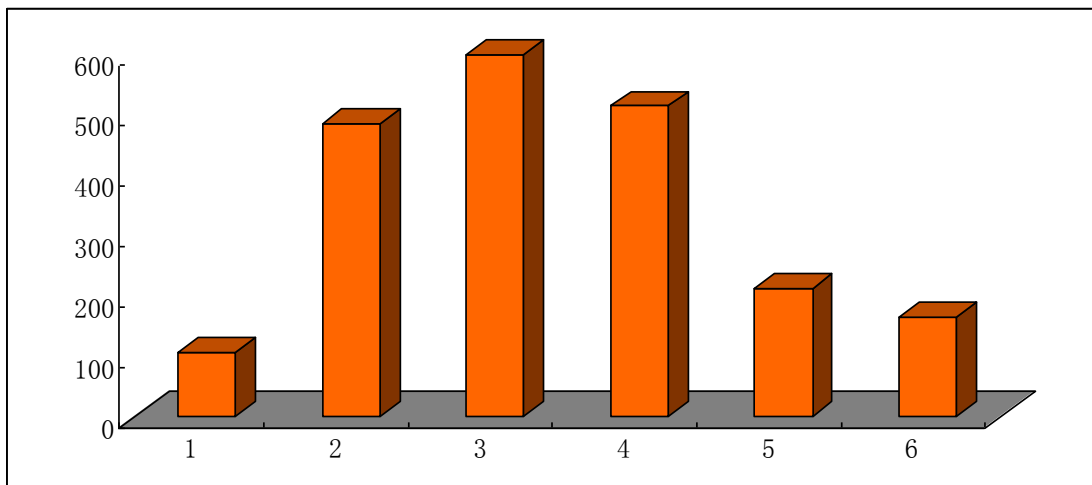


Figure 30 Results of Question 1

1: Making a pilgrimage

2 appealing for good luck

3: Understanding Thailand's religion and culture

4: Appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand

5: Relaxing and relieving pressure

6: Other motives

4.2.4 Do you have good experiences with top six religious sites?

The results of the questionnaire showed that the score for Wat Phra Kaew was 3.71 ± 0.3215 , the score for Wat Pho was 3.67 ± 0.2678 , the score for Wat Traimit was 3.51 ± 0.2144 , the score for Erawan Shrine was 3.61 ± 0.1396 , the score for Trimurti Shrine was 3.14 ± 0.3122 , and the score for Ganesha Shrine was 2.81 ± 0.2178 , the score for other places was 2.88 ± 0.54 .

Tourist experience refers to a tourist's overall impression for a local attraction after he traveling there, which specifically includes the tourist's impression for the management and service, scenic landscapes of a scenic spot, as well as his impression for the product that he consumes there. Considering from the results of the questionnaire, the scores that Chinese tourists gave for Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit and Erawan Shrine were the highest, the Chinese respondents believed that the four religious places gave them the best tourist experience, the score for Trimurti Shrine was a little lower, showing that the respondents thought that their impression for the religious place was better. The scores for Ganesha Shrine and other places were the lowest, showing that the tourist experience that the respondents obtained from the places was less good.

Table 5 Results of Question 4

Place	Wat Phra Kaew	Wat Pho	Wat Traimit	Erawan Shrine	Trimurti Shrine	Ganesha Shrine	Other Places
Scores	3.71±0.3 215	3.67±0.2 678	3.51±0.2 144	3.61±0.1 396	3.14±0.3 122	2.81±0.2 178	2.88±0.2 54

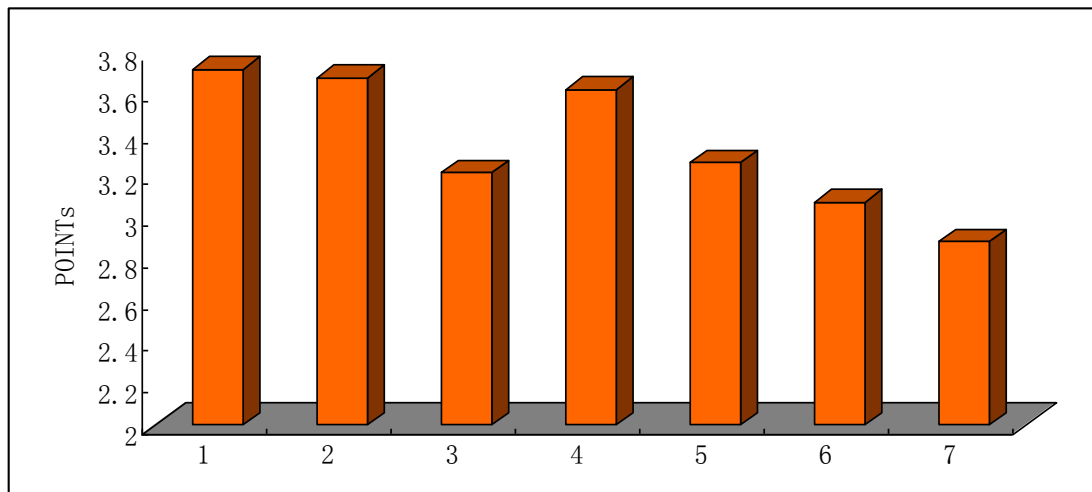


Figure 31 Results of Question 7

1: Wat Phra Kaew,

2: Wat Pho

3: Wat Traimit

4: Erawan Shrine ,

5: Trimurti Shrine

6: Ganesha Shrine

7: Other places

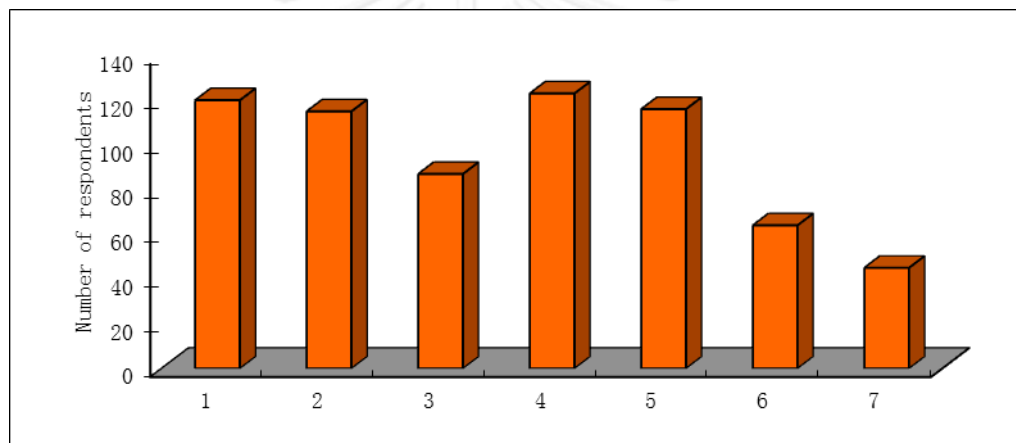
4.2.5 Which place would you like to visit again the next time you visit Thailand?

The results of the questionnaire displayed that 120 respondents chose Wat Phra Kaew as the destination for from next trip, accounting for 56% of the total number of the respondents. 115 respondents chose Wat Pho as the destination for next trip in Thailand, accounting for 54% of the total number. 116 respondents chose Wat Traimit, accounting for 54% of the total number. 123 respondents chose Erawan Shrine, accounting for 57 % of the total number. 87 respondents chose Trimurti Shrine, accounting for 41% of the total number. 64 respondents chose Ganesha Shrine, accounting for 30% of the total number. 45 respondents chose other places in Thailand, accounting for 21% of the total number.

The numbers of the respondents who chose Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit and Erawan Shrine as the destination for from next trip in Thailand were the largest, there was a slight difference among the numbers of the respondents, accounting for 56 %, 53%, 57%, 54% of the total number. The number of the respondents who chose Trimurti Shrine as the destination was the fourth largest, accounting for 41% of the total number. The number of the respondents who chose Ganesha Shrine as the destination was the fifth largest, accounting for 30% of the total number. The number of the respondents who chose other places for their next trip was the least, accounting for 21% of the total number.

Table 6 Results of Question 5

Item	Wat Phra Kaew	Wat Pho	Wat Traimit	Erawan Shrine	Trimurti Shrine	Ganesha Shrine	Other places
Number of respondents	120	115	116	123	87	64	45
Percentage	56 %	54%	54%	57%	41%	30%	21%

**Figure 32** Results of Question 8

1: *Wat Phra Kaew,*

2: *Wat Pho*

3: *Wat Traimit*

4: *Erawan Shrine ,*

5: *Trimurti Shrine*

6: *Ganesha Shrine*

7: *Other places*

4.3 Results of the interview

Interview objects included operators who planed Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand tourism, guides who are responsible for Chinese tourists, as well as Chinese tourists. Among tourists interviewed in this study, there were five tourists who were 20-30 years old, two visitors were 30-40 years old, two tourists were 40-50 years old. There was a visitor who was over the age of 50. Four visitors were male, six tourists were female. These visitors have been to Thailand for religious tourism for more than two times, thus they were more familiar with Thai religious places to cooperate with the investigation of this study. Among the guides interviewed in this study, there were three men, two women, they were 28-38 years old, they have been engaged in tourism for Chinese tourists for more than five years, thus they have a more profound understanding for characteristics of religious tourism behavior of Chinese tourists and they could better cope with the author of this study in investigation. Among the operators interviewed in this study, there were four male operators and a female operator, they were 39-41 years old, they have an average of more than eight years of experience of being operators in tourism. Thus, they have a more profound understanding for the tourism industry in Thailand and the behavioral characteristics of Chinese tourists' religious tourism, thus they could better meet this study in investigation.

Interview of each time lasted about 20 minutes. The interview was carried out through a face to face way in travel agencies in Bangkok which deal with receiving Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand. When the interview began, the interviewers first of all announced the purpose of this investigation, explaining how

the interview content will be used. Some generic term would be involved in the interview was also explained for the respondents to answer questions better. After acquiring the approval of the respondents', the content of the interview was taken down. Specific information relating to the interviewees' is shown as below.

Table 7 Background Information of Interviewed Chinese Tourists

Name	Gender	Age	Type of Interviewee	Type of Interview	Place	Time for Interview	Code
Chen Li	Female	32	Teacher/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent I
Cao Hui	Female	22	Public servant Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent II
Qi Hui	Male	22	Public servant Tourist/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	25 minutes	Respondent III
Li Yi	Male	22	Student/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent IV
Li Fang	Female	27	Student/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent V
Chu Liang	Male	41	Employer/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent VI
Chu Qing	Female	51	Employer/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent VII

Chu Sui	Male	41	Employee/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent VIII
Gong Mi	Female	22	Student/Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent IX
Chen LuLu	Female	34	Public servant Tourist	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent X

Table 8 Background information of Interviewed Guides

Name	Gender	Age	Type of Interviewee	Type of Interview	Place	Time for Interview	Code
Jiang Shen	Female	28	Guide	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent XVI
Tian Feng	Male	29	Guide	Face to face	Bangkok	25 minutes	Respondent XVII
Ma Teng	Male	38	Guide	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	XVIII
Wang Ming	Female	35	Guide	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent XIX
Yang Liu	Male	33	Guide	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent XX

Table 9 Background Information of Interviewed Operators

Name	Gender	Age	Type of Interviewee	Type of Interview	Place	Time for Interview	Code
Fang Lin	Female	41	Operator	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent XI
Zhou Si	Male	39	Operator	Face to face	Bangkok	20 minutes	Respondent XII
Guo Tao	Male	42	Operator	Face to face	Bangkok	25 minutes	Respondent XIII
Feng Tao	Male	45	Operator	Face to face	Bangkok	25 minutes	Respondent XIV
Dong Qlu	Male	41	Operator	Face to face	Bangkok	25 minutes	Respondent XV

4.3.1 Questions for Chinese tourists

The 10 interviewed Chinese tourists have been well-educated, they have high cultural qualities and were also very interested in Thailand's religious, cultural, religious sites. The 10 respondents have been to all the tops six religious sites. Choosing the 10 tourists as interviewees could more clearly understand Chinese tourists' views on Thai religions, culture, so as to more clearly understand the characteristics and motives of Chinese tourists' religious tourism behavior.

4.3.1.1 What do you know about religions in Thailand?

The 10 respondents in this study mentioned that Buddhism is the main religion in Thailand. There were 7 respondents (respondent I, II, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX) also highlighted that in Thailand, the people also stressed the freedom of religion, so other religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, etc., exist simultaneously. There were 8 respondents (respondent II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X) mentioned that Thailand's most popular form of Buddhism is Hinayana Buddhism. The answers showed that the interviewed Chinese tourists have more accurate understanding for the basic status of religions in Thailand, this is one of the important reasons for why they chose Thailand as the destination for tourism.

4.3.1.2 What is your purpose to visit Thailand?

Excepting the respondent VI, the other nine respondents all agreed that they hoped to experience Thailand's religious culture and visit the religious and cultural landscape in Thailand, that was their main purpose of travelling in Thailand.

There were 6 respondents (respondent I, II, V, VII, VIII, X) said that there were large scales of architecture in Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, it is difficult to see this Buddhist architecture elsewhere in the world, as all the buildings have rich Thai specialties, such as multilayer roofs, towering spire, using wood carvings, gold, porcelain, stained glass, pearls to decorate temples. In the Buddhist temples, the sculptures are also distinctive, which are quite different from Chinese Buddha sculptures. Respondent II and respondent V mentioned that many Chinese tourists came to the three temples to enjoy the architectural features. There were 5

respondents (respondent I, II, V, VIII, X) thought that this was not the first time he has been visiting Bangkok temples. Bangkok's temples are a unique part of the capital's heart and soul. A visit here would not be complete without seeing at least two of them. The architecture is awe-inspiring and the glittering decoration like no other.

There were 7 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, VII, X) who also pointed out that they hoped to visit temples and shrines to receive blessings and good luck.

There were 4 respondents (respondent I, V, VII, X) who said that there was another motivation for their religious tourism in Thailand, it was to relax, they said they came to Thailand for tour when they have holidays every year. They went to visit the three temples and Erawan Shrine each time when they came to Thailand, as they felt much pressure in their daily work and lives, visiting the temples and the shrine was more conducive to relaxation, because the atmosphere in temple is quiet and peaceful, allowing them easy to relax.

There was only a respondent (respondent VI) who said that he came to visit Thai temples for pilgrimage, because he was a Buddhist, he would come to participate in the dressing ceremony of the Jade Buddha in annual festival in the summer, he would also hold flowers and light candles to participate in religious activities and ceremonies.

4.3.1.3 Do you know any famous temples in Bangkok? Which temples have you been in Bangkok?

10 respondents all believed that they knew the three famous temples:

Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho and Wat Traimit. 10 respondents said that had been to the three temples. They said that their travel route typically included Wat Phra Kaew, so they came to Wat Phra Kaew most. There was less arrangement for them to visit Wat Pho and Wat Traimit, so they went to the two temples less.

10 respondents said that Wat Phra Kaew was the most impressive. 6 respondents (respondent I, II, III, V, VII, X) said that their favorite temple was Wat Phra Kaew, because they liked magnificent buildings in Wat Phra Kaew, they said that there were exquisite and grand Buddhist architecture in the temple, the multilayer roof, the towering spire were decorated with wood carvings, gold, porcelain, stained glass, pearl, these architecture characteristics are unique and they have never seen before. 5 respondents (respondent I, V,VI,VII, X) said that they liked murals and statues in Wat Phra Kaew very much, they thought that these murals not only show a fairy tale, but also exhibit superb painting. 3 respondents (respondent I V, IX) thought that they liked the beautiful statues in Wat Phra Kaew, such as the giants, hermits, kinnara, guardian and so on. They believed that these statues are unique, sophisticated, reflecting the artistic climax of ancient Thailand. 2 respondents (respondent II and VII) specially mentioned that they were through visiting Wat Phra Kaew to understand Thai history, including emperors in Thailand, the history of exchanges between Thailand and other countries. 10 respondents also described that there is a large copper vat in front of the temple, the vat is full of water, baskets beside the vat are neatly placed with emerald green lotus. They dip lotus into the water and sprinkled the water on their foreheads to show that they are christened because the guide told them to do so to get bless and good luck. 10 respondents also described that there is a large copper vat in front of the temple, the vat is full

of water, baskets beside the vat are neatly placed with emerald green lotus. They dip lotus into the water and sprinkled the water on their foreheads to show that they are christened because the guide told them to do so to get bless and good luck.

10 respondents said that the golden Buddha currently in Wat Traimit is the largest Buddha statue made of pure gold, which made them impressive. 6 respondents (respondent II, III, V, VI, VII, X) believed that they were through visiting Wat Traimit to understand the history of the golden Buddha. 10 respondents found that there are many small lottery machines at Wat Traimit, and the screens of the machines can still display Chinese. They have participated in the draw. They have also learned the way that locals do, clasp their hands together and worshiping sincerely to ask the golden Buddha to bless themselves and their families to have good health, peaceful and successful career. 4 respondents (respondent II, III, V, VI) further explained that they came to Thailand with a tour agency, they arranged everything for them. They told the guide that they wanted to visit temples but they did not choose a specific temple. Recommended by the tour guide, they have known Wat Traimit. The first activity arranged for them to visit the temple was to worship and make a wish after the tour guide explained history of temple. Then, they walked around and perceived if there is anything interesting. He said that they were not Buddhists, but through the entire journey, they found many interesting things, such as a variety of statues, buildings, and here, they got mental relaxation and entertainment, they felt that Wat Traimit was a place that was worthwhile of visiting. 8 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, X) specially mentioned that by visiting the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre at Wat Traimit, they have a rough

understanding for the history of the development of the Chinese in Yaowarat, and thus having a better understanding of the contribution of the Chinese to the economic development and social development in Thailand, as well as the friendship between China and Thailand.

8 respondents (respondent IV, VI, VIII) said that their favorite was Wat Pho, as there are a lot of statues, which enables them to experience the religious culture in Thailand. 10 respondents said that the reclining Buddha in Thailand gave them the feeling that it was too big, when he first saw it, he was shocked, because it was kept well and quite solemn. Although they were not Buddhist, when they saw the Buddha, they were impressed by this solemn atmosphere, the feeling of visiting the reclining Buddha was a very, very good experience. 5 respondents (respondent I, II, IV, VI, VIII) said that Chinese tourists could enjoy ancient history and culture of Thailand through visiting Wat Pho. For example, the pillars, walls, halls in the corridors of Wat Pho are engraved with many inscriptions. The contents include architecture, history, Buddhism history, medicine, proverbs, literature, geography, customs, and so forth. Chinese tourists learned Thai history through visiting Wat Pho. The 5 Chinese tourists also agreed that Wat Pho is indeed a historic temple, they understood the history and culture of Thailand that they were never familiar with in the past by visiting Wat Pho. 5 respondents (respondent II, III, IV, VII, VIII) said that they could admire the architectural style of Thailand through touring Wat Pho, the most distinctive building at Wat Pho is the towers, these towers are one of the most brilliant group of buildings in Bangkok. The five Chinese tourists also considered that the architectural style of Wat Pho is really unique, impressive. 10 Chinese tourists also said that they could get some religious experience at Wat Pho. There are many

copper bowls at Wat Pho. The 10 Chinese visitors used baht to exchange a bowl of coins, then reverently, dropped the coins one by one into the copper bowls. The reasons for doing so was to obtain the bless from the Buddha, or to get some experience related to religion, they felt that this was very novelty.

4.3.1.4 Do you know any shrines in Bangkok? Which shrines have you been in Bangkok?

10 respondents all believed that they knew the three famous shrines: Erawan Shrine, Ganesh Shrine, Trimurti Shrine. 10 respondents said that had been to the three temples. They said that their travel route typically included Wat Phra Kaew, so they came to Wat Pra Kaew most. There was less arrangement for them to visit Wat Pho and Wat Traimit, so they went to the two temples less.

10 respondents said that believed that Erawan Shrine is the place that they must visit in Thailand. They were through friends, travel agencies and guides to know that Erawan Shrine is efficacious. 5 respondents (respondent I, II, V, VIII, X) mentioned that they came for the second time or even the third time for promise fulfillment and making a vow to the god, but they did not know the specific meaning of Erawan Shrine. They learned about the significance of Erawan Shrine with the help of the guides. The four faces are on behalf of career, love, health and wealth. The front face reflects career, business, the left reflects marriage, the right reflects health and the back reflects wealth. The 10 Chinese tourists said they bought some items to worship Erawan Shrine, near the shrine, they could buy items such as candles, flowers, incense and more for worship.

The 10 Chinese tourists also mentioned that they did not know in

advance that they have to follow certain norms and procedures in worshipping Erawan Shrine, with the help of guides, they complied with local rituals and ceremonies when they visit Erawan Shrine in Thailand. The 10 respondents said that they knew through the introduction of the guides that if they pray at the moment and the wish would be achieved one day, they must come back to worship Erawan Shrine for fulfilling the promise. Votive way is usually worshipping each side with three sticks of incense, a candle, seven strings of jasmine, a wood elephant, coupled with what they have promised as votive way, such as donating, releasing, or inviting dance group to perform Lakhon Chatree to show thanks to Erawan Shrine.

6 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, IX) said that they liked visit Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, it was worth noting that 6 respondents were young people. Among the 6, two respondents said that they preferred shopping in Central World, while the two shrines are near Central World, the young Chinese tourists were willing to pay homage to the two shrines. The other four respondents mentioned that China's propaganda websites and guides introduce that Ganesh Shrine is mainly in charge of school work, career and wisdom, while Trimurti Shrine is in charge of love, young people have more demand in these areas, so they were more willing to visit Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine.

4 respondents (respondent VI, VII, VIII, X) said that they were more interested in visiting Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, as they were more interested in local culture in Thailand, they wanted to observe the process of Thais' and tourists' visiting Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine to understand religious culture in Thailand to gain a unique travel experience.

4.3.1.5 How do you think of Thailand before you come? How do you think about Thailand now?

4 respondents (respondent I, III, IV, V) said that before coming to Thailand, they just knew that ancient Thailand was named “Siam”, it had economic and cultural exchange with ancient China. When they came to Thailand, they found that Thailand has a long history. In the history, there were economic and cultural exchanges between Thailand and India, China, Myanmar, Laos. They thought that today’s Thailand shows the perfect fusion of traditional culture and history, it not only retains its own unique history, culture and religious shrines, but also has modern architecture, business center. Thailand is a special tourist destination.

3 respondents (respondent II, VII, VIII) mentioned that what impressed them most were the culture and art in Thailand. Before coming to Thailand, they were just by Thai movies, magazines to understand some of the Thai culture and arts, such as religious culture, film arts, etc. When they arrived in Thailand, they found the uniqueness, diversity and inclusiveness of Thai culture and art, they have a more profound understanding for Thai culture and art such as the religious culture, food culture, architecture, painting, sculpture and so on. Modern Thai culture and art blend traditional and ancient, Eastern and Western features, almost every tourist can find something that they like, it is a suitable tourist destination.

3 respondents (respondent VI, IX, X) showed that they impressed most by the religions in Thailand. In the past, they just knew that Thais are Buddhists, after arrived in Thailand, it was found that Thai people are so devout for their belief and Buddhism impact their lives largely. When they travelled in Thailand, they came to

know that Thai Buddhism and Chinese Buddhist are different, in Thailand, not only Buddhism, but also Hinduism, animism and other religious have a higher influence on Thais. Modern Thai people are still very devout for religions. The respondents thought that religions give Thailand some mystery, which makes Thailand more attractive.

4.3.1.6 How do you think about top six religious sites in Bangkok?

What is the deepest impression do you think about each place?

6 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, IX) believed that they liked Wat Pra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, Erawan Shrine, Trimurti Shrine, Ganesh Shrine very much. 4 respondents (respondent VI, VII, VIII, X) said that they liked Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, Erawan Shrine.

In terms of Wat Pra Kaew, 7 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, VI, IX) said they were most impressed by the jade Buddha there. 2 respondents (respondent VII, VIII) believed that what impressed them most was the building. A respondent (respondent X) was impressed most by the murals. Considering Wat Pho, 9 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX) said that they were most impressed by the huge reclining Buddha, a respondent (respondent X) was impressed by the inscriptions recording ancient Thai architecture, history, Buddhism history, medicine, proverbs, literature, geography, customs. As far as Wat Traimit is concerned, 5 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, VI) said that they were most impressed by the pure gold Buddha, 5 respondents (respondent V, VII, VIII, IX, X) said that they were deepest impressed by the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre, which allowed them to have a rough understanding of history of Chinese in

Yaowarat. Considering Erawan Shrine, 10 respondents said that they were most impressive by the piety and worship scene. For Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, 6 respondents (respondent I, II, III, IV, V, IX) said that they were most impressive by the scene of worshipping.

4.3.2 Questions for tour operators

4.3.2.1 What do you think Chinese tourists important to Thai tourism industry?

The three respondents (respondent XI, XII, XIII) recognize that the arrival of Chinese tourists has offered Thailand's tourism industry tremendous opportunities for development, Chinese tourists have a large consuming capacity, which has had a positive impact on the local economic development and employment in Thailand. 3 respondents (respondent XII, XIII, XIV) said that there were exchanges in the history between China and Thailand, China and Thailand have many similarities in culture, many Chinese people are interested in Thai culture, religion, natural beauty and art.

2 respondents (respondent XIV, XV) also raised the that in the last two years, the number of Chinese tourists' going to Thailand has increased largely, it was less than 1 million by 2011, in 2012, it increased to 2.7 million, China emerged as the largest country of tourist source for Thailand, in 2013, there will be 3 million Chinese tourists who choose Thailand for that tourist destination, Chinese tourists go to Thailand and will bring 123 billion Thai baht for its tourism revenue.

3 respondents (respondent XI, XII, XIII) believed that they were optimistic about the future of China's economic development, they thought that with the development of China's economy, China's people's income will increase,

there will be more and more Chinese people who travel to Thailand, the potential demand for Chinese tourists to Thailand is still large. Chinese tourists play an important role in the long-term development of the tourism industry in Thailand.

4.3.2.2 Why do you choose the religious sites for Chinese tourists?

3 respondents (respondent XI, XII, XIII) illustrated the reason for choosing these attractions as that these attractions are well-known, Chinese tourists are very willing to come to these attractions. The three respondents (respondent XI, XII, XIV) believed that many Chinese people believe that they can get good luck and bless through burning incense and praying. Thus many Chinese tourists are very happy to visit Thailand's religious tourist attractions. 2 respondents (respondent XIII, XV) also mentioned that some people come to Thailand to visit the religious landscape for understanding religious culture and appreciation of religious landscape in Thailand, it is because Thailand's religious culture has a long history, rich cultural heritage,

2 respondents (respondent XIV, XV) added that they choose these attractions because these attractions relatively have better supporting facilities for tourist, such as convenient transportation as well as accommodation and food conditions which are more in line with the needs of Chinese tourists well.

4.3.2.3 What religious sites do you usually arrange for Chinese tourists?

5 respondents answered that Wat Phra Kaew, Erawan Shrine are the tourist attractions that they often arrange for Chinese tourists most. 3 respondents

(respondent XI, XII, XIII) said, in the arrangement of routes for Chinese tourists' traveling in Thailand, 50% of the routes will cover Wat Pho, 30% will include Wat Traimit. 2 respondents (respondent XIV, XV) mentioned that in the routes of their agencies for Chinese tourists, 20% will include Trimurti Shrine, Ganesha Shrine.

4.3.2.4 What kind of information and highlights of top six religious sites do you advertise for Chinese tourists?

5 respondents said that they would introduce the cultural, historical and religious backgrounds of religious sites to Chinese tourists. 3 respondents (respondent XI, XIII, XIV) also said that they would focus on publicizing the relationship between Chinese tourists and certain religious attractions, such as the relationship between Wat Traimit and Chinese people, or certain Chinese star has worshiped at Erawan Shrine. 2 respondents (respondent XII, XV) said that they would focus on the introduction of the building, art, and landscape features of a religious site, such as the Reclining Buddha at Wat Pho, the jade Buddha at Wat Phra Kaew and so on. 3 respondents (respondent XI, XIII, XV) mentioned that they would emphasize that certain places would give visitors good luck, such as Erawan Shrine, Wat Pho, and so on.

4.3.3 Questions for guides

4.3.3.1 What religious sites in Bangkok are most popular among Chinese tourists?

5 respondents believed that Wat Phra Kaew and Erawan Shrine are Chinese tourists' favorite and most popular religious landscapes. Because Wat Phra Kaew has a great reputation, it is the royal temple in Thailand, which has the most

valued landscapes, architecture, art masterpiece, many Chinese tourists have learned about the characteristics of Wat Phra Kaew through a variety of ways before they came to Thailand. Travel agencies most like to recommend this temple to Chinese tourists, so this temple is the most popular religious site. Considering Erawan Shrine, 5 respondents said that the reason for why it is the most popular shrine lies in that Erawan Shrine's reputation has been known by many Chinese people, they want to get good luck and blessings by paying homage to Erawan Shrine. A respondent (respondent XX) said that Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine are more popular among young people, he also found that some visitors with homosexual tendencies are more interested in Trimurti Shrine, because they believe that it could help them to find true love.

4.3.3.2 Do you understand top six religious sites of Bangkok well?

How do you introduce each place for Chinese tourists?

5 respondents said that they were familiar with the six religious sites. 5 respondents said that they would through a running commentary and disseminating materials to introduce the cultural, historical and religious backgrounds of religious sites to Chinese visitors, they also have special emphasis on how to comply with the norms of religious sites, telling Chinese tourists what behavior is not allowed. 3 respondents (respondent XVI, XVII, XVIII) said that they have used rich literary language to describe religious buildings, landscape, making the subtle features of the religious sites appear in the eyes of tourists, allowing visitors to better appreciate the landscape and architecture. 3 respondents (respondent XVI, XVII, XIX) mentioned that they would personally show visitors how to worship, so as to facilitate Chinese tourists' learning and imitating.

4.3.3.3 Would Chinese tourists like to know about the history and the culture background of religious sites in Bangkok?

5 respondents said that there are a large number of Chinese tourists, they have different backgrounds and their travel behavior is different. 4 respondents (respondent XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIV) confirmed that some Chinese tourists traveled in Thailand by way of a small group. Tourists of this part were mostly teachers, businessmen, public servants. Some the tourists came to Thailand by way of free walk, tourists of this part were mostly students and young workers. Tourists of the above two parts generally have high quality, they are more interested in Thai culture, Buddhist culture, history and better comply with local cultural practices and norms. 5 respondents said that most Chinese visitors travelled to Thailand in the form of a large group. Tourists of this part have uneven levels of quality, of course, some of them do not have a high level of education, some tourists did not obey the local tourist habits, such as wearing sleeveless clothing, shoes during the process of visiting temples and worshipping the gods. They are not very interested in Thai culture, religions, they more like taking pictures, praying for good luck in religious places, they are also keen on shopping in duty-free shops or buying products of famous brands in traveling.

4.3.3.4 What is the Chinese tourist's behavior when they visit top six religious sites in Bangkok?

5 respondents said that about 85 percent of Chinese tourists did not know in advance how to pay homage, pray. After Chinese tourists were told what to do, about 80% of Chinese tourists would do according to what guides told them to do, because they hoped to get good luck and blessings through prayer and baptism.

For example, in Wat Phra Kaew, many Chinese tourists also learned to do like what the locals did: clasp hands together and worship sincerely to seek for blessing themselves and their families. In Wat Pho, many Chinese tourists dropped into coins copper bowls in order. Each cast a coin, they made a wish in front of the vow box, in order to obtain good luck. When Chinese tourists visit Erawan Shrine, they wash their hands with the holy water within the temple, or sprinkling to head, according to a clockwise direction and start from the front entrance to worship each side with three sticks of incense, a candles, a bunch of jasmine flowers.

4.4 Discussion

This section combines relevant literatures to conduct an in-depth analysis on the questionnaire and interview results.

4.4.1 Chinese tourists' attitudes to each top six religious sites.

4.4.1.1 Buddhist temples

4.4.1.1.1 Wat Phra Kaew

Wat Phra Kaew becomes one of the most popular religious sites among Chinese tourists in Thailand the purposes lie in the following aspects.

Firstly, as introduced by guides interviewed in this study that Wat Phra Kaew is a royal temple. Wat Phra Kaew was built in 1782, it has a long history and was built when the Thai Bangkok dynasty was established. Rama I was the first king who moved Thai capital to Bangkok, he took Wat Phra Kaew as a national sacred place guarding the country. Important ceremonies are often held for the royal family in Wat Phra Kaew (Weidenfeld, 2006). There is no monk living in the temple.

Whenever the seasons change, the King of Thailand dresses the Emerald Buddha personally, in order to maintain peace and prosperity for the country (Kivela, 2006). During the ploughing ceremony every year in May, the king also holds religious ceremonies there to pray for good harvests (Frederic, 1965).

In China's history, there have been many famous royal temples, such as Xiangguo Temple and so on. Chinese people have a natural impression for royal temples, one is because usually royal temples are large, magnificent, showing a solemn feeling; the other is because Chinese people believe that Buddha in royal temples are very efficacious, they are willing to travel to Thailand to visit (Sukanya Sujachaya, 1999). Therefore, Chinese tourists will have considerable interest in Thailand's royal temples. As a royal temple in Thailand, Wat Phra Kaew is unique, tourists can learn the unique culture of Thailand by visiting Wat Phra Kaew. Four respondents said that the reason for their visiting the temple was that it is a royal temple in Thailand.

Secondly, Wat Phra Kaew reflects the integration of religious diversity. Religious complexity, animistic, Hinduism and Buddhism are reflected in Wat Phra Kaew (Uriely, Israeli and Reichel, 2003). First of all, Wat Phra Kaew is a Buddhist temple, tourists can appreciate Buddhist ceremonies there. Then, works of art and architecture in the temple have Hindu characteristics. Finally, Chinese tourists can learn animistic behaviors of tourists such as worshipping the emerald Buddha, treat it as a benevolent spirit whom people can ask for what they wish. Results of the questionnaire in this study also showed that 64% of Chinese visitors said that experiencing religious culture in Thailand was also the motivation of travelling in the

temple. There are four respondents who said that the religious culture reflected in Wat Phra Kaew was their motivation to visiting the temple.

Thirdly, Thai history, architecture, art are reflected in Wat Phra Kaew. Chinese tourists can learn about the history of Thailand by touring Wat Phra Kaew, for example, through introduction by guides to learn about the history of the Thai royal family, the history of Sino-Thai development, and so on (Cohen, 2003). Chinese tourists can enjoy many fine, grand Buddhist architectures through visiting Wat Phra Kaew, for example, there are Prasart Phra Debidorn, Phra Mondop, Phra Sri Ratana Chedi, Two Golden Chedis and so on. Chinese tourists also can enjoy the works of art such as cloister frescoes and statues in Wat Phra Kaew.

The interview results of this paper showed that Chinese tourists liked buildings in Wat Phra Kaew very much, they said they had never seen such a unique architectural style before. Results of this questionnaire also showed that 64% of visitors expressed that appreciation of these unique architectures was one of the main motivations of their touring Wat Phra Kaew.

Fourthly, in fact, the emerald Buddha is composed of emerald instead of jade. In the interview process, Chinese tourists mentioned that they did not know the difference between these two materials, this concept about the difference is confusing. Jade is opaque and emerald is mostly translucent or transparent. Both can be carved, though jade is much softer. Emerald is more scarce and precious. For Chinese people, jade is a symbol of beauty and good fortune, so Chinese tourists called it jade Buddha. When they came to Thailand, they came to know that the emerald Buddha is not a jade Buddha but emerald, which makes Chinese tourists

more surprise and appreciate. In China, emerald is a symbol of good fortune, it has seen treat as a thing of god. From ancient times, China has many legends about emerald and they are full of rich magical, secret colors. Even today, people think that emerald can bring good luck, they often wear it as an ornament (Shytor, 1998). Meanwhile, Chinese people like emerald because they believe that emerald represents noble character. In Chinese Buddhist culture, emerald is also a very important artifact, the famous Buddhist classic Lotus Sutra more look on emerald as a one of "seven treasures". All in all, Chinese people have a natural goodwill and respect for the emerald Buddha composed of emerald, so they are more willing to worship the emerald Buddha (Shytor, 1998).

Finally, meanwhile, it is worth noting that Chinese tourists came to understand and appreciate Wat Phra Kaew for understanding Thailand's history, architecture and art, as well as experiencing Thai religious ceremonies, such as the lotus and the holy water in front of Wat Phra Kaew, which can not be found in other temples in Thailand but unique in Wat Phra Kaew. There is a large copper vat in front of the temple, the vat is full of water, baskets beside the vat are neatly placed with emerald green lotus, visitors who want to enter the temple should dip lotus into the water and sprinkle the water on their foreheads to show that they are christened. In this paper, five interviewees have said that they have done so, because the guide told them to do so to get bless and good luck. Another five interviewees said that they also learned to do as what Thais do: clasp their hands together and sincerely worshiping, by doing so to ask for blessing good health, peace for themselves and their families. Two interviewees also said that as there is hot weather in Thailand and there are many tourists in Wat Phra Kaew. After visiting the temple, most of tourists

will feel hot, holy water can make tourists cool off and feel comfortable, some people also drink holy water.

4.4.1.1.2 Wat Pho

Wat Pho is located next to the Grand Palace, Wat Pho is the oldest temple in Bangkok, it is also the largest temple in Thailand. Wat Pho is a part of the Grand Palace and it is very close to Wat Pra Kaew, thus many Chinese tourists will also visit Wat Pho to enjoy the Thai history, art and architecture. Chinese tourists also pray here to expect to get good luck (Uriely, Israeli and Reichel, 2003).

Chinese tourists can learn the ancient history and culture of Thailand through tours of Wat Pho. For example, the pillars, walls, halls in the corridors of Wat Pho are engraved with many inscriptions. The inscriptions were engraved during the period of King III, the contents include architecture, history, Buddhism history, medicine, proverbs, literature, geography, customs, and so forth, in particular knowledge relating to traditional Thai herbs, as well as how to develop herbs. In ancient Thailand, only Thai scholars or aristocrats can learn this knowledge. However, RAMA III made the knowledge about herbs popular when Wat Pho was built, which is very meaningful, because this knowledge had been popularized for the public. Thus, it is called "the first university in Thailand." The questionnaire results showed that 80% of Chinese tourists learned Thai history through visiting Wat Pho. The interview results also revealed that five Chinese tourists also agreed that Wat Pho is indeed a historic temple, they understood the history and culture of Thailand that they were never familiar with in the past by visiting Wat Pho.

Thai people are very proud of their Buddhist culture, and thus through tourism, they convey Buddhist culture to foreign tourists, Chinese tourists can enjoy Thai Buddhist culture and art by visiting Wat Pho. Wat Pho is Bangkok's oldest and largest temple, it has Bangkok's largest reclining Buddha and most statues of Buddha and chedis. Reclining Buddha inside Wat Pho is 46 m long, each paw is 5 meters long, 1.5 meters wide, the two feet are stacked, each is decorated with 108 auspicious patterns formed by pearl shell, the huge reclining Buddha shows the greatest art of statue and Buddhist art in Thailand. Especially the reclining Buddha is largest, it is the world's largest reclining Buddha, Chinese people like big things. In China, there is the world's largest stone seated Buddha named Leshan Giant Buddha. Every year there are a lot of people who go to visit the Leshan Giant Buddha, it also has a high visibility in China. Therefore when Chinese tourists to see world's largest reclining Buddha in Wat Pho, they also feel that it is very magical, and they are like to visit this temple. A Chinese tourist in this study mentioned that, the reclining Buddha in Thailand gave him the feeling that it was too big, when he first saw it, he was shocked, because there was no such a large reclining Buddha in China, it was kept well and quite solemn, although he was not a Buddhist, when he saw the Buddha, he was impressed by this solemn atmosphere, the feeling of visiting the reclining Buddha was a very, very good experience.

What's more, there is a famous Thai massage at Wat Pho. Wat Pho is known as a centre for traditional medicine. Since the 1960s, it has been considered as the best massage school in Thailand. Highly trained masseurs are on hand to relieve visitors of their aches and pains. The school also offers 10- or 15-day massage courses, which are taught in both Thai and English. Many foreign tourists including

Chinese tourists came to Wat Pho and expressed their willingness to try Thai massage after being affected by what guides introduced about the Thai massage at Wat Pho. Chinese massage industry is relatively developed, Chinese people prefer receiving massage, thus many Chinese tourists who came to Wat Pho were willing to accept a massage. The Chinese tourist said: “if you've never tried a traditional Thai massage, Wat Pho is a good place to start”. It's quite different to most other forms of therapeutic massage and tends to be invigorating rather than relaxing, incorporating yoga style postures to relieve stress and improve blood circulation”.

A guide interviewed in this study also introduced that Wat Pho is famous among Chinese visitors for its Thai Traditional Massage School which offers three kinds of massage services namely, body massage, body massage with herbs and foot massage. This is also an important reason for Wat Pho in attracting Chinese tourists.

Chinese tourists also get some religious experience at Wat Pho. For example, there are many copper bowls at Wat Pho. Visitors can use baht to exchange a bowl of coins, then reverently, drop the coins one by one into the copper bowls. When cast a coin, visitors can make a wish in front of the vowing box. Many Chinese tourists will do so when they come here to visit, because the guides will explain that doing so will make them be blessed, and the guides will also explain that if visitors throw their last coin to the last bowl, it means that visitors will have good luck. The questionnaire results showed that 80% of Chinese tourists have prayed at Wat Pho. The interview results of this paper also displayed that five respondents threw coins at Wat Pho, the reasons for doing so was to obtain the blessing from the Buddha, or to get some experience related to religion, they felt that

this is very novelty.

4.4.1.1.3 Wat Traimit

Wat Traimit is one of the three famous temples in Thailand, compared with Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit is less famous, but as there between Wat Traimit is inextricably linked with Chinese, many Chinese tourists will come to visit Wat Traimit. Through visiting Wat Traimit, Chinese tourists can either sightsee or understand Chinese people's history of development in Thailand, they can pray in the temple.

The golden Buddha currently in the temple is the world's largest Buddha statue made of pure gold. The gold Buddha statue is 3 meters (9.8 ft) tall and weighs 5.5 tons (5.4 long tons; 6.1 short tons) (Nathalang, 2004).

In Buddhist culture in China, to gild statues represents the highest reverence, because gold is very rare, it can show veneration for Buddha, and statues decorated with gold is very solemn. Besides, Chinese people believe that the stability of gold, it allows statues to be kept long. People want to pray for good fortune, safety or avoiding difficulty, misfortunes through gilding. Meanwhile, according to Buddhist scriptures, gold is one of the seven treasures of Buddhism, in terms of gold, it was undoubtedly the first of the seven treasures. This further indicates the importance of gold in Buddhism (Fisher, 2012). However, guides interviewed in this study introduced that Buddha in Chinese Buddhist temples are basically laced with gold, and the Buddha statue in Wat Traimit in Thailand is made of pure gold, it weighs 5.5 tons and nearly 4 meters high, it has such a big size and is

built by pure gold, naturally, in the hearts of Chinese tourists' and devotees', it has supremacy. Thus Chinese tourists and devotees are respect it and hope to visit tathagata in Wat Traimit. The guides and operators in this study also mentioned that the golden Buddha is famous for Chinese, visiting the golden Buddha was one of the reasons for visiting Wat Traimit. The interview results showed that five of the respondents said that the golden Buddha is the largest solid gold Buddha that they have ever seen and the golden Buddha is impressive.

4.4.1.1.3.1 The Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre

Wat Traimit is located in the Chinese community, is inextricably linked with overseas Chinese, it is said the temple was funded by the three Chinese (Uriely, Israeli and Reichel, 2003). It can be said that this temple itself reflects the history of overseas Chinese's integration into Thai society to some extent, it is also the product of cultural exchanges between Chinese and Thailand. There is the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre at Wat Traimit, the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre is located at the second floor of Wat Traimit, it is divided into six sections for exhibition, making use of means of reproduction of the scene, coupled with sound and light technology to vividly describes the history of the development of Yaowarat Chinatown for two hundred years (Cohen, 2003).

The guide interviewed in this study said, after visiting this exhibition, Chinese tourists will have a rough understanding for the history of the development of the Chinese in Yaowarat, and thus having a better understanding of the contribution of the Chinese to the economic development and social development in Thailand, as well as the friendship between China and Thailand.

The guides and operators in this study also pointed out that Thailand is a Buddhist country, the history of overseas Chinese in Thailand can be combined with the temples. This is on the one hand explains that the Chinese have integrated into the mainstream society and lived in harmony with the people of Thailand; on the other hand, it also shows that today's Thai people have accepted the Chinese in Thailand as their own countrymen, they have also fully affirmed the colonized history of the Chinese in Thailand. It can be said that the establishment of exhibition for history of the Yaowarat Chinatown at Wat Traimit can not only let Chinese visitors have an intuitive and concentrated look of the history of development of the overseas Chinese in Thailand, but also make the temple a symbol of Sino-Thai friendship. The interview results showed that three visitors said that Chinese tourists visited Wat Traimit to understand relevant history. The interview results also revealed that five respondents said that by visiting Wat Traimit, they have a better understanding of the history of Chinese people's developing in Thailand, they also have a new understanding for Sino-Thai friendship.

4.4.1.1.3.2 Phra Buddha Maha Suwanna Patimakorn Exhibition

There is an important museum of Wat Traimit named the Phra Buddha Maha Suwanna Patimakorn Exhibition. Chinese tourists can understand the history of the golden Buddha and how the golden Buddha statues were dedicated to presenting through visiting the museum. Chinese tourists can also find a copy of the 1991 Guinness Book of Records which records the Golden Buddha as the "sacred object with the highest intrinsic value of £21.1 million. This valuation is on the basis of the gold price in April 1990 at £227 per fine ounce.

4.4.1.1.3.3 Religious experience

Through visiting Wat Traimit, Chinese tourists can also get some religious experience, for example, there are many small lottery machines at Wat Traimit, and the screens of the machines can still display Chinese, and many Chinese tourists come here to visit Wat Traimit will participate in the draw. Chinese tourists also learn the way that locals do, clasp their hands together and worship sincerely to ask the golden Buddha to bless themselves and their families to have good health, peaceful and successful career. The questionnaire results showed that 80% of Chinese tourists have prayed at Wat Traimit. The interview results of this paper also indicated that five respondents have balloting and worshiping behavior at Wat Traimit, their reasons for doing so was to obtain the bless from the Buddha, as well as some experience about religion, they felt that the experience was novel.

4.4.1.1.4 Behavioral characteristics of Chinese tourists' visiting the three temples

Visiting the three temples not only allows Chinese tourists to learn and understand Thai culture, history, architecture, but also helps them to understand and learn the development of Chinese culture in Thailand, as well as some Chinese cultural factors in Thai temples. For example, as guides introduced that at Wat Phra Kaew, people can still see a decorative porcelain wall formed by patterns of plum, chrysanthemum, peony and birds, this was brought here by the famous navigator in Chinese Ming Dynasty name Zheng He, which reflects the history of exchanges between China and Thailand. At Wat Pho, aside from the Reclining Buddha, the rockeries and rock giants are reflection of features of Chinese culture at Wat Pho,

which also fascinates Chinese tourists. Guides introduced that all Chinese stony or cement rock giants and rockeries found as gate guardians and in the parks are ballast from the ancient trading travels to China. It is an intelligence of the ancient Thai applying this ballast for decorations in many places of this monastery (Siraporn Nathalang, 2004a). Through visiting Wat Traimit in the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre, Chinese tourists can visit what the local Chinese contributed to Thailand's economic development and social development, as well as the contribution of the Chinese to the relationship between China and Thailand. Chinese visitors can intuitively feel the history of the development of Chinese in Thailand.

The operators and guides interviewed in this study mentioned that it is popular in Thailand that when people come to Bangkok, they should worship nine temples within a day to show piety and respect for the gods. The nine temples are Wat Bowornniwet/ Motto: Good Health, Wat Dibayavari Vihara/ Motto: Endless Love, Wat Devaraj Kunjara/ Motto: Evolution, Wat Kanlayanamit/ Motto: Prosperity, Wat Traimit/ Motto: Wealth, Wat Ratchabophit/ Motto: Business Steady, Wat Pho/Motto: Success and Fulfillness, Wat Arun(The Temple of Dawn) / Motto: Peacefulness and Wat Ratchanatda/ Motto:Happiness. But the vast majority of Chinese people do not know this, they know it after listening to what the guides said when they came to Thailand. This shows that before coming to Thailand, Chinese tourists do not know Buddhist temples and the habit of worshipping in the temples in Thailand very well, so the motivation of their visiting temples in Thailand is not pilgrimage, because Chinese tourists lack the piety and respect, but Thais in Thailand have for Buddhism.

In the Buddhist culture in Thailand, once a believer promises in front of

Buddha and the desire comes true, he needs to thank the Buddha, otherwise bad luck will come. For example, a guide interviewed in this study said that Thai people seldom make a vow to god at Wat Traimit, because they must redeem a vow to the god, otherwise, they would have bad luck. Thus they often go to Wat Traimit to worship, and learn the history and culture relating to China, but they seldom make a vow to god. Through interview in this study, it has been found that the majority of Chinese people more or less knew some knowledge in this area, the guides also mentioned that, some Chinese tourists said that although they were not Buddhist followers, they still worshiped Buddha at temples in the country, so they have knowledge of this aspect. There were also some young tourists who said that in their families, as the elders believed that, when there were holidays, the elders would bring them to worship in temples, so they also have relevant knowledge. In the interview, most of the tourists have said that if the desire they promised in the Thai temples came true, they would be happy to come back to fulfill the promise. Only a few Chinese tourists were not very aware of this, after introduction by the guides, they also expressed their willingness to come back to redeem a vow to the god.

Besides, the four tourists interviewed in this investigation pointed out that compared with the three Buddhist temples, the surroundings around the temples are relatively noisy, there are market and stalls outside the temples, which are different from what they imagined about Thai temple, but as they entered the temples, they had a kind of peaceful feeling. This also explains to some extent that the Chinese tourists may indeed be infected by the art and religious atmosphere in the Thai temples.

4.4.1.2 Hinduism shrines

The questionnaire results in this study proved that the majority of Chinese tourists in the survey did not have religious belief, they have a certain degree of understanding of knowledge about Buddhism and culture. However, the vast majority of Chinese tourists did not understand knowledge relating to Hinduism and Brahmanism.

Brahmanism formed in southern Asia in the first millennium B.C., Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva are the three most influential denominations in Brahmanism (Evrard and Leepreecha, 2009). Four Vedas are considered as the holiest religious texts. Buddhism was born in the 6th century BC, Buddha was respected as supreme god and Brahmā, became the attendant of Buddha. Hinduism integrate the religious doctrine theory of Buddhism, respecting Brahmā, Vishnu. Shiva as the supreme gods, yet the Buddha is called as an incarnation of Vishnu. Likewise, Four Vedas are considered the holiest religious texts (Evrard and Leepreecha, 2009).

It can be seen from these data that Buddhism is very different from Hinduism. Chinese tourists still came to visit shrines under the circumstances when they did not understand the doctrine of Hinduism, which revealed that the purpose for Chinese tourists' visiting the shrines was not pilgrimage, the main motives of their visiting the shrines were as mentioned in the interview results, one for secular motive, as they heard that these shrines are very efficacious, especially the Brahmā at Erawan Shrine, they wanted to get blessing through worship. Second is the motive to get religious experience, they wanted to visit the shrines to understand local religious culture.

4.4.1.2.1 Erawan Shrine

Erawan Shrine in the central business district of Bangkok was built in 1956, it is one of Bangkok's famous tourist attractions (Keyes, 2006). The results of the questionnaire and interview in this study showed that 80 percent of Chinese tourists would come to visit and worship Erawan Shrine. The interview results indicated that visitors knew that Erawan Shrine is very efficacious, but they did not know the specific meaning of Erawan Shrine. The interviewees in this study said that they learned about the significance of Erawan Shrine with the help of the guides. The four faces are on behalf of career, love, health and wealth. The front face reflects career, business, the left reflects marriage, the right reflects health and the back reflects wealth. Meanwhile Chinese tourists will buy some items to worship Erawan Shrine, near the shrine, they can buy items such as candles, flowers, incense and more for worship. In a corner of the shrine, there are flowers for selling, the prices are from 20 baht to 500 baht, bigger flowers often cost more money (Wilson, 2008; whittaker, 2012). The interviewees in this study also mentioned that they did not know in advance that they have to follow certain norms and procedures in worshipping Erawan Shrine, with the help of guides, they complied with local rituals and ceremonies when they visit Erawan Shrine in Thailand. For example, first of all, they wash their hands with the holy water within the temple, or sprinkling to head, according to a clockwise direction and start from the front entrance to worship each side with three sticks of incense, candles, a bunch of jasmine flowers. The interviewed respondents said that they knew through the introduction of the guides that if they pray at the moment and the wish would be achieved one day, they must come back to worship Erawan Shrine for fulfilling the promise. Votive way is usually

worshiping each side with three sticks of incense, a candle, seven strings of jasmine, a wood elephant, coupled with what they have promised as votive way, such as donating, releasing, or inviting dance group to perform Lakhon Chatree to show thanks to Erawan Shrine (Whittaker, 2012).

4.4.1.2 Trimurti Shrine

Trimurti Shrine is also less famous than Erawan Shrine (Wilson, 2008; Whittaker, 2012). There were few Chinese tourists who knew and worshiped Trimurti Shrine in the past. As it is also near the entrance of the Central World, when Chinese tourists visit Central World, they will incidentally notice the shrine and visit it. In addition, Trimurti Shrine is in charge of love, many local young people in Thailand come to pay homage to it to expect love, so guides always introduce it to Chinese tourists as the God of love. Many young Chinese tourists are willing to visit Trimurti Shrine after listening to what guides introduce about Trimurti Shrine, as they want to get their love through worshiping Trimurti Shrine. Of course, there are still some older Chinese tourists who are interested in visiting Trimurti Shrine, as they are interested in the local culture in Thailand, they want to know how the local young men worship Trimurti Shrine. In China, Chinese tourists rarely find in China that people use red rose to worship religious images, as what the local young people do in Thailand. Besides, it is known through the introduction of the guides in the interview in this study that among Chinese tourists, there were also some homosexual tourists who came to visit Trimurti Shrine. Chinese tourists of this part are especially devout in worshiping Trimurti Shrine, because there is very little religious image which can help homosexuals to get love.

An operator interviewed in this study specially introduced that Trimurti is the Cupid in Thailand, it has been the favorite of many young people in Thailand. Thai people believe that Trimurti is a concept in Hinduism in which the cosmic functions of creation, maintenance and destruction are personified by the forms of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the maintainer or preserver and Shiva the destroyer or transformer. These three deities have been called Hindu triad or Great Trinity. A guide interviewed in this investigation mentioned that this Trimurti will ward off evil and bring people good luck of love. Devotees believe that Trimurti descends from heaven to the earth on Tuesday and Thursday at around 21:30 to hear their prayers and favor-seeking. For best results, believers should not forget to make offerings of nine red incense sticks, red candles, red roses and fruits. Three tourists interviewed in this study specifically mentioned that Trimurti Shrine belongs to Hindu shrines, but people worship with roses which represent romantic by Westerners in the evening, they thought that Thais' worship of Trimurti Shrine has the characteristics of both Eastern religions and Western religions. However, they did not believe that Thai people's such actions are conflict, they thought that Thai people are very imaginative, as they allow different religious cultures to integrate here, as tourists, they also got unique travel experience.

4.4.1.2.3 Ganesh Shrine

Compared with Erawan Shrine, Ganesh Shrine was built late and it is less famous, thus there are fewer visitors who know Ganesh Shrine (Whittaker, 2012). As it is in front of the market of the Central World, when Chinese tourists visit Central World, they will incidentally notice the shrine and visit it. Dissemination about the

shrine by tour agencies in China also contributes to Chinese tourists' visiting the shrine. Most travel companies have used the prototype photo of Ganesh Shrine in promotion of Ganesh Shrine, so Chinese tourists affectionately called it elephant god shrine (xiang shen shenkan in Chinese) (Whittaker, 2012). Ganesh Shrine is mainly in charge of wealth (Andrea whittaker, 2012). Through the interview in this study, it was known that some Chinese tourists wanted to achieve their desire to get wealth through worshiping Ganesh Shrine. Some Chinese people visit Ganesh Shrine for curiosity for Thai culture, they are not concerned about whether Ganesh Shrine can really bring wealth, they are more interested in observing the process of Thais' and tourists' visiting Ganesh Shrine to understand religious culture in Thailand to gain a unique travel experience.

4.4.1.2.4 Conclusion

In terms of the shrines, most Chinese tourists interviewed in this study believed that Erawan Shrine is efficacious. Among the interviewed Chinese tourists, some tourists came for the second time or even the third time for promise fulfillment and making a vow to the god, people of all ages liked to visit Erawan Shrine. For Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, there were mainly young people who liked to visit and worship. First of all, as young people prefer shopping in Central World, while the two shrines are near Central World, the young Chinese tourists were willing to pay homage to the two shrines. Then, China's propaganda websites and guides introduce that Ganesh Shrine is mainly in charge of school work, career and wisdom, while Trimurti Shrine is in charge of love, young people have more demand in these areas, so they are more willing to visit Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine. All

in all, the three shrines in Thailand meet the Chinese tourists' secular motive of seeking blessing and motive of experiencing Thai culture.

With the development of economy, philosophy and modern science, the impact of religions on a society declines, but religions are not dead and a new phenomenon of secular religion emerges. Taking Chinese Buddhism for example, Buddhism pursues liberation of life, the starting point and destination are becoming a Buddha, so it transcends worldly. With the emergence of secular Buddhism, content, rituals and norms of modern Buddhism are getting closer and closer with society, Buddhist concept relating to secular norms increases, Buddhist monks are engaged in more mundane activities. However, it is worth noting that secularization has not led to the decline of religion in modern society, secularization of religion makes the form, content and as well as social functions of religion change to better meet the needs of modern people. For example, belief of modern people is based more on material rewards and benefits rather than religion. Economy develops rapidly in a modern society, the wealth of society also increases rapidly, however, people in this society also face various pressures, and people's desires have been inflated. Modern people need to find an appropriate way to release the pressure and meet their desires. Secularization of religion makes it an important way in appeasing emotions, spiritual consolation, seeking good fortune and blessings for modern people. Thus, religion has once again been sought by many modern people, of course, many people worship not for pilgrimage but for a variety of secular motivations, they want to get blessed, have an access to wealth, good luck, get travel experience by worshipping Buddha. For example, there are high-end malls around the three shrines, they were established not for religious reasons but largely related to business

purposes, such as ensuring the successful construction of building the malls, blessing the booming business, and so on.

Most people come to visit the shrines for a variety of secular motivations, such as hoping to bless lottery, get love, get a successful career and so on. In order to promote the development of tourism, Thai tourism sector also advertises the shrines which are considered to be very efficacious, thus Trimurti Shrine, Ganesh Shrine are also slowly known by Chinese tourists, resulting in a large number of Chinese tourists' visiting the shrines, Chinese tourists also hope to meet their secular motivations by worshipping the shrines. Majority of visitors investigated in the questionnaire and interview in this study were urban residents of Chinese large cities. It has been found through the questionnaire and the interview that most of them were not believers, especially those shrines they worshiped are Hindu gods, they simply did not know those shrines before, they simply only understood the name and relevant information of the shrines by introduction by the travel agencies and guides. They worshiped the shrines for a variety of secular motivations. For example, some Chinese tourists wanted Erawan Shrine to bless them to get wealth and career, and some people hoped Trimurti Shrine to bless them to get love, and some people hoped Ganesh Shrine to bless them to have good academic performance, and so on. All in all, secular religion is in favor of meeting modern people's secular motivations, secular religion also makes religion once again be accepted by more modern people.

4.5 Conclusion

The number of Chinese tourists holding the motivation of understanding

Thailand's religion and culture was the most; the number of Chinese tourists holding the motivation of appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand was the second; the number of Chinese tourists holding the motivation of appealing for good luck was the third; the number of Chinese tourists holding the motivation of relaxing and relieving pressure was the fourth; the number of Chinese tourists holding other motivation was the fifth; the number of Chinese tourists holding the motivation of making a pilgrimage was the sixth.

The questionnaire and the interview results of this study showed that Chinese tourists prefer visiting Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Traimit, and Wat Pho and the Erawan Shrine, and they have a good experience of and when they visited the four places, they were willing to choose these four afore mentioned places as destinations when they return to Thailand. It is noteworthy that Chinese tourists are not so interested in the Trimurti Shrine, Ganesha Shrine, some old tourists do not take these two shrines as tourist destinations. The reason lies in that first of all, the two shrines are not so famous in the Chinese world. Then, the religious significance of the two shrines are more suitable for young people.

Chinese tourists have important implications for the development of tourism in Thailand. There are a large number of Chinese tourists, Chinese tourists' travel behavior has its unique characteristics, there are differences between Chinese tourists' travel behavior of different groups, travel agencies and departments in Thailand need to develop appropriate policies and measures according to these characteristics.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Thailand as one of the most popular tour destination all over the world also attracts a large amount of Chinese tourist from mainland China. The top six religious sites for Chinese tourists in Bangkok from the survey result of this thesis, top three Buddhist temples, Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit and the top three Hindu shrines, Erawan Shrine Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine were visited by the majority of the Chinese tourists visiting Thailand. Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit as the three major important temples in Bangkok are the ancient Buddhist temples which reflect various aspects of Thai culture, such as the history, religion, architecture, arts to Chinese tourists. The Hindu Shrines Erawan Shrine Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine which are located in the central business shopping area of Bangkok was built in recent decades are worshiped by both local Thai people and foreign tourists especially Chinese tourists. The author as a Chinese student studies in Thai Studies Program of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and works for the Thai Tourism industry is interested to do research about the connection between religious sites Bangkok and Chinese tourists who visit these religious sites.

The first objective of this thesis is to explore the religious sightseeing pattern of mainland Chinese tourists in Bangkok. The questionnaire results in this study show that 599 person-times believe that their motivation of visiting in Thailand was understanding Thailand's religion and culture, the person-time ranked the first; there were 514 person-times holding the motivation of appreciating the religious

landscape in Thailand, the person-time ranked the second; there were 486 person-times having the motivation of appealing for good fortune, ranking the third; 213 person-times had the motivation of relaxing and relieving stress, ranking the fourth; 166 person-times had other motivations, ranking the fifth; 106 person-times had the motivation of making a pilgrimage, ranking the sixth. The questionnaire results and the interview results of this study commonly illustrate that Chinese tourists visit religious places in Thailand not for pilgrimage but to experience and appreciate Thai religious culture and religious buildings, relaxation, receiving blessings and good fortune, and so on.

The interview results indicate that most respondents in this study agree that they hoped to experience Thailand's religious culture and appreciate the religious and cultural landscape in Thailand that was their main purpose of travelling in Thailand. There were some respondents who indicated that they were improved by the large scales of architecture in Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Pho, Wat Traimit, it is rare to see this Buddhist architecture elsewhere in the world, as all the buildings have rich Thai artistic features, enjoying architecture of temples in Thailand was their main purpose of visiting the temples. Some respondents also pointed out that they hoped to visit temples and shrines to receive blessings and good fortune. Several respondents said that another motivation of their coming to Thailand was relaxation, as they felt much pressure in their daily work and life, visiting the temples and shrines were beneficial for their relaxation. The quiet and peaceful atmosphere in the temples is what tourists find relaxing. Only one respondent said that he came to visit Thai temples for the purpose of making a pilgrimage. The interview results in this study show that there are a large number of Chinese tourists and they have

different backgrounds and different tourist behaviors. The guides interviewed in this study said that a number of the Chinese tourists came in small groups to come to Thailand for tourism. Tourists of this part were mostly teachers, businessmen, and government civil servants. They generally have high quality, they were more interested in Thai culture, Buddhist culture, history and better comply with local cultural practices and norms. The guides said that most Chinese visitors travelled to Thailand large groups. Tourists of this part have uneven levels of quality, of course, some of them did not have a high level of education, some tourists did conform to the local habits, such as dress inappropriate, while visiting temples or worshipping the deities. They were not very interested in Thai culture, religions, they preferred taking pictures, praying for good fortune in religious places.

The guides interviewed in this study said that 85% of Chinese tourists did not know in advance how to pay homage or pray. After Chinese tourists were told about how to behave, about 80% of Chinese tourists did according to what guides told them to do, because they hoped to get good luck and blessings through prayer and worship. These findings showed the characteristics of tourism behavior of Chinese tourists in visiting religious sites in Thailand, Chinese tourists of different occupations, different levels of education were totally different in their tourism behavior of visiting in Thailand, this conclusion was in line with hypothesis 3 that travel agencies and government offices related to promoting tourism in Thailand need to develop appropriate policies and measures according to these characteristics, so as to meet the needs of different Chinese tourists, as well as help visitors of different backgrounds to better comply with and be familiar local religious rituals and regulations in Thailand.

The second objective in this study is to investigate how various aspects of Thai Buddhism respond to the needs of mainland Chinese tourists in Bangkok. The respondents interviewed in this study believed that the Temple of Emerald Buddha was the most impressive, they appreciated magnificent buildings, murals and statues in Wat Phra Kaew very much, they were through visiting Wat Phra Kaew to understand Thai history, including the monarchy in Thailand, the history of exchanges between Thailand and other countries. The tourists believed that through worshipping at Wat Phra Kaew, they could get bless and good luck.

Ten tourists interviewed in this study found the golden Buddha currently in Wat Traimit is the largest Buddha statue made of pure gold, to be very impressive. They visited Wat Traimit to understand the history of the golden Buddha. The tourists said that through visiting the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre at Wat Traimit, they have a rough understanding for the history of the development of the Chinese in Yaowarat, and thus have a better understanding of the contribution of the Chinese to the economic development and social development in Thailand, as well as the friendship that exists between China and Thailand.

Some tourists in this study said that their favorite was Wat Phra Chettuphon or Wat Pho, as there are a lot of statues and stupas, which enables them to experience the religious culture in Thailand. Although they were not Buddhist, when they saw the Buddha, they were impressed by this solemn atmosphere, the feeling of visiting the Reclining Buddha was a very, very good experience. The tourists could enjoy ancient history and culture of Thailand through visiting Wat Pho. For example, the pillars, walls, halls in the corridors of Wat Pho are

engraved with many inscriptions. The contents include architecture, history, Buddhism history, medicine, proverbs, literature, geography, customs, and so forth. They could admire the architectural style of Thailand through touring Wat Pho, the most distinctive building at Wat Pho is the towers, these towers are one of the most brilliant group of buildings in Bangkok. The tourists also said that they could get some religious experience at Wat Pho, such as obtaining blessing from the Buddha or gain some spiritual experience related to religion, they felt that this was very special.

Other respondents believe that Erawan Shrine is the place that they must visit in Thailand. It was through friends, travel agencies and guides that they learned the reputation of the Erawan Shrine as efficacious. Some respondents mentioned that they came for the second time or even the third time for promise fulfillment and making vows to the deity. They bought some items to worship the Erawan Shrine, near the shrine, they could also buy items such as candles, flowers, incense and more for worship.

Some respondents said that they liked visit Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, it was worth noting that these were young people. They knew that the Ganesh Shrine is mainly devoted to school work, career and wisdom, while Trimurti Shrine is supposed to be in charge of love, young people have more concerns in these areas, so they were more willing to visit Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine. Four respondents said that they were more interested in visiting Ganesh Shrine and Trimurti Shrine, as they were more interested in local culture in Thailand, they wanted to observe the process of Thais' and tourists' visiting Ganesh Shrine and

Trimurti Shrine to understand religious culture in Thailand to gain a unique travel experience.

In summary, the temples and shrines studied in this thesis are some of the most significant and unique religious sites in Thailand. Therefore, Thai religious sites are not suitable only for locals who wish to pursue their religious activities, but also attract millions of secular tourists from foreign countries because of its particular history, scenery, architecture and cultural tradition. The top three temples and the top three shrines have become Chinese tourists' favorite religious destinations when they travel in Thailand.

This study attempts to have considered the motivations and tourism behavior of Chinese tourists' visiting religious sites in Thailand, as well as the significance of these religious places. The author hopes that the conclusions of this study could help relevant personnel of the tourism industry in Thailand and China to develop targeted policies, systems and regulations to enable Chinese tourists to get a better travel experience and help the local tourism industry to promote their tour programs. A better understanding would help tour operators to provide the services that the Chinese tourists expect and fulfill their expectations while at the mean time prepare them to be able to visit these places in an appropriate manner.

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APPENDIX

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY



APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Please tick (✓) one or more than one of the boxes which closely match your personal opinions in each question.

Q1: What is your motive of going to visit temples and shrines in Thailand?	
A. Making a pilgrimage and appealing for good luck <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Understanding Thailand's religion and culture <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Appreciating the religious landscape in Thailand <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Relaxing and relieving pressure <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other motives <input type="checkbox"/>	
Q2: Through what channels did you have an access to information about religious attractions in Thailand?	
A. Network <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Newspapers and magazines <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Information provided by travel agencies <input type="checkbox"/>	D. TV <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other channels <input type="checkbox"/>	
Q3: What are your requirements for the diet during your visiting temples and shrines in Thailand?	
A. Meeting religious customs and norms <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Meeting sanitary requirements and being affordable <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Being delicious <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Having salient Thai features <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	
Q4: What are your requirements for your accommodations during your visiting temples and shrines in Thailand?	
A. Meeting religious customs and norms <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Meeting sanitary requirements and being affordable <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Having high-level lodging facilities (according to levels of three-star hotels) <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Having convenient transportation nearby <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	
Q5: When have you been to Thailand, for example, in the first / second/ third or fourth quarter of a year?	
A. In the first quarter <input type="checkbox"/>	B. In the second quarter <input type="checkbox"/>
C. In the third quarter <input type="checkbox"/>	D. In the fourth quarter <input type="checkbox"/>
Q6: What is your destination of religious travel in Thailand?	
A. Wat Phra Kaew <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Wat Pho <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Wat Traimit <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Erawan Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>

E. Trimurti Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>	F. Ganesha Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>				
G. Other places <input type="checkbox"/>					
Q7: You have good tourist experience for the following religious destinations, do you agree?	Least agreement ---- Most agreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
-Wat Phra Kaew	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Wat Pho	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Wat Traimit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Erawan Shrine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Trimurti Shrine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Ganesha Shrine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Other places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q8: Which place would you like to visit again when you come to Thailand next time?					
A. Wat Phra Kaew <input type="checkbox"/>			B. Wat Pho <input type="checkbox"/>		
C. Wat Traimit <input type="checkbox"/>			D. Erawan Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>		
E. Trimurti Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>			F. Ganesha Shrine <input type="checkbox"/>		
G. Other places <input type="checkbox"/>					
* Background Information					
Q9: .Your gender?					
A. Male <input type="checkbox"/>			B. Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
Q10: Your marital status?					
A. Married <input type="checkbox"/>			B. Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/>		
Q11: Your educational background?					
A. Primary education <input type="checkbox"/>			B. Secondary education <input type="checkbox"/>		
C. College education <input type="checkbox"/>			D. University education <input type="checkbox"/>		
Q12: Your age?					
A. Below 20 <input type="checkbox"/>			B. 20-40 <input type="checkbox"/>		

C. 40-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Above 60 <input type="checkbox"/>
Q13: Your occupation?	
A. General employee <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Employer <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Students <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Others <input type="checkbox"/>
Q14: Your monthly income?	
A. Below ฿15,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	B. ฿15,000 to ฿ 25,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
C. ฿25,000 to ฿ 35,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Above ฿35,000 <input type="checkbox"/>
Q15: Your times of having been to Thailand?	
A. 1-3 times <input type="checkbox"/>	B. 3-5 times <input type="checkbox"/>
C. More than 5 times <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Never <input type="checkbox"/>
Q16: Your times of having been to Thailand?	
A. 1-3 times <input type="checkbox"/>	B. 3-5 times <input type="checkbox"/>
C. More than 5 times <input type="checkbox"/>	D. Never <input type="checkbox"/>
Q17: Your religious beliefs?	
A. Buddhism <input type="checkbox"/>	B. Christianity <input type="checkbox"/>
C. Islam <input type="checkbox"/>	D. N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Other religions <input type="checkbox"/>	



APPENDIX II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF INVESTIGATED OBJECT



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Bai Qi	Male	61	Employer	Beijing	N/A	Married
Bai Yang	Male	18	Student	Beijing	others	Unmarried
Bai Shan	Male	62	Others	Beijing	N/A	Married
Bai Li	Female	18	Student	Beijing	Christianity	Unmarried
Bo Yang	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unmarried
Chen LuLu	Female	34	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Chen Jing	Female	64	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Chen Jiang	Male	61	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Chen Li	Female	32	Others	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Chen Sang	Female	22	Student	Shanghai	Christianity	Unmarried
Chen Mei	Female	24	Student	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unmarried
Chen Min	Male	45	Employer	Nanjing	Buddhism	Married
Chen Qiong	Female	61	Others	Nanjing	others	Married
Chen Long	Male	62	Others	Changsha	Islam	Married
Cheng Shu	Female	41	Employer	Beijing	N/A	Married
Cheng FuLi	Male	43	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Cheng Ding	Male	43	Employer	Nanjing	Christianity	Married
Cheng Ma	Male	34	General Employee	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Cheng Wang	Male	34	General Employee	Da Lian	Others	Unmarried
Cheng Sai	Male	32	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Cheng Qi	Male	45	Employer	Da Lian	Others	Married
Cheng Liang	Male	51	Employer	Nanjing	Others	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Cao Ming	Male	41	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Cao Hui	Female	22	Others	Shanghai	Christianity	Unmarried
Cao Jing	Male	19	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Cao Wei	Male	45	Employer	Shanghai	Others	Married
Cao Long	Male	61	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Cai Hua	Male	43	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Cai Si	Female	42	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Cai Ma	Female	19	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Cai dong	Male	18	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Chu Liang	Male	41	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Chu Qing	Female	51	Employer	Beijing	Buddhism	Married
Chu Sui	Male	41	General Employee	Nanjing	Others	Married
Cui LiLi	Female	42	General Employee	Shanghai	Others	Married
Cui Feng	Male	18	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Cui Qing	Male	34	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Married
Cui Si	Female	32	Student	Nanjing	Others	Married
Dai Hua	Female	19	Student	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried
Dai Si	Female	19	Student	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unmarried
Dai Ming	Male	31	Student	Shen Zhen	Others	Unmarried
Dai Cheng	Male	31	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Dai Ming	Male	19	Student	Shen Zhen	N/A	Unmarried

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Dai Sai	Male	27	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Dai Long	Male	42	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Dai Yu	Female	31	General employee	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unknown
Deng YuLin	Male	67	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Deng Yu	Male	61	Others	Shanghai	Others	Married
Deng WuSi	Male	21	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Deng ZeYu	Male	22	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Deng Ya	Female	53	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Dong Cheng	Female	51	Employer	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Dong Fang	Male	41	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Dong Sen	Male	43	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Du Ya	Female	24	Student	Shanghai	Others	Unmarried
Du SeQi	Male	45	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Du SiSi	Male	61	Employer	Nanjing	Islam	Married
Du Ming	Female	66	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Du Ka	Male	65	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Du Li	Male	21	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Du Ce	Male	22	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Fang Qin	Female	53	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Fang Fang	Female	51	Others	Shanghai	Others	Married
Fang Ting	Female	41	General Employee	Nanjing	Christianity	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Fang YuMing	Male	43	Employer	Nanjing	Buddhism	Married
Fang Lin	Female	43	Employer	Tai Yuan	N/A	Married
Fan ZhiGuo	Male	40	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Fan Hua	Female	41	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Fan Qi	Female	18	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Fan Yi	Male	18	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Fan Sen	Male	41	General Employee	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Fan Hui	Female	21	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Fan Bing	Male	22	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unknown
Fan Qiu	Male	41	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Feng Yu	Male	61	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Feng Cheng	Male	19	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Feng Ting	Female	41	General Employee	Tai Yuan	Buddhism	Unknown
Feng Sai Qi	Male	42	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Unknown
Feng Lin	Male	31	General Employee	Changsha	N/A	Unmarried
Feng De	Male	32	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Feng Lu	Male	64	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Gao Gang	Male	18	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Gao Can	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Gao Qi	Female	39	General Employee	Shanghai	Islam	Married
Gao Lin	Male	51	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Gao Yi	Female	41	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Gao Lan	Female	43	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Guan qi	Female	33	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Guan Yu	Male	21	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Guan Luan	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	others	Unmarried
Guan Se	Female	65	Employer	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Guan Min	Male	61	Employer	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Guan Ying	Female	62	Others	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Guo Yi	Female	63	Employer	Beijing	N/A	Married
Guo lan	Female	43	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Guo Wu	Male	18	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Guo Zi	Male	34	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Guo Piao	Male	32	General Employee	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Guo Jia	Male	65	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Guo HuiHui	Female	66	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Guo HuaYao	Female	67	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Guo Cheng	Male	68	Employer	Nanjing	Christianity	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Gong Na	Female	21	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unknown
Gong Mi	Female	22	Others	Nanjing	Buddhism	Married
Gong Qi	Female	31	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Gong Qing	Male	31	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Gong Yu	Male	18	Student	Tai Yuan	N/A	Unmarried
Gong Wei	Male	27	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Gong Chai	Male	29	General Employee	Shen Zhen	N/A	Unmarried
Gong Liang	Male	31	Student	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unmarried
Gong Yun	Male	32	General Employee	Nanjing	Islam	Unmarried
Han Xin	Female	33	General Employee	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unmarried
Han Ying	Male	21	Student	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried
Han Bing	Male	22	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Han qi	Female	39	Employer	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried
Han Wei	Male	19	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Han Gang	Male	41	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Huang Yu	Male	65	Others	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Huang Lin	Male	62	Others	Shanghai	Islam	Married
Huang Ma	Male	63	Others	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried
Huang Shan	Female	34	Employer	Beijing	Christianity	Unmarried
Huang Ting	Female	32	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Huang Can	Female	61	Employer	Beijing	Christianity	Married
Huang Sen	Male	51	Employer	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Huang Chao	Female	32	General Employee	Shanghai	Islam	Married
Hu Bing	Male	42	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Hu lin	Male	41	Employer	Beijing	N/A	Married
Hu Shan	Female	45	Employer	Beijing	N/A	Married
Hu Ce	Male	61	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Hu YiYi	Female	43	General Employee	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Hu Shan	Female	33	General Employee	Nanjing	Islam	Unmarried
Hu Hui	Female	21	Student	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unmarried
Hu HuiZhong	Female	44	Employer	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married
Hu SiQi	Male	39	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Jiang Chang	Male	51	Employer	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Jiang Chao	Male	41	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Jiang Yang	Female	43	General Employee	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Jiang Liang	Male	43	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Kong Yi	Male	34	General Employee	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unmarried
Kong Chu	Male	69	General	Changsha	N/A	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
			Employee			
Kong Can	Male	32	General Employee	Shanghai	Christianity	Unmarried
Ke YiMin	Male	43	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Ke Zhen	Male	32	General Employee	Beijing	Christianity	Unmarried
Ke shuai	Female	21	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Li Hua	Female	22	Student	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unmarried
Li Qi	Female	66	Others	Beijing	N/A	Married
Li Min	Male	67	Others	Beijing	N/A	Married
Li Yi	Male	22	Student	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Li Fang	Female	27	Student	GuangZhou	N/A	Unmarried
Li Mai	Male	66	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Li Wan	Male	61	Others	Shen Zhen	Buddhism	Married
Lin Min	Male	61	Others	Beijing	Islam	Married
Lin Lin	Male	33	General Employee	Changsha	N/A	Unmarried
Lin yi	Female	21	Student	Nanjing	Christianity	Unmarried
Lin YiFan	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Lin Dong	Female	61	Employer	Shanghai	Christianity	Married
Liu Shan	Male	51	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Liu Bang	Male	61	others	GuangZhou	Islam	Married
Liu Fu	Female	62	General Employee	Beijing	Buddhism	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Liu Yi	Male	32	General Employee	GuangZhou	Buddhism	Married
Liu Dang	Male	45	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Liu Li	Male	51	General Employee	Nanjing	others	Married
Liu Bin	Male	32	General Employee	Shanghai	others	Unmarried
Liu Wan	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Ma Hua	Female	24	General Employee	Shanghai	others	Unmarried
Ma Chao	Male	62	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Ma Jin	Female	61	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Niu Qun	Male	67	General Employee	Nanjing	Buddhism	Married
Niu fang	Female	33	General Employee	GuangZhou	N/A	Unmarried
Niu Meng	Male	43	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unknown
Niu Yi	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	N/A	Unmarried
Nie Qian	Female	39	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Married
Nie Hua	Female	67	Employer	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Nie Chu	Male	41	General Employee	Beijing	Buddhism	Married
Pan Yi	Male	62	Employer	Shanghai	Islam	Married
Pan Min	Male	61	Employer	Shanghai	Buddhism	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Pan Sen	Male	65	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Pang Hui	Female	61	General Employee	Beijing	Christianity	Married
Pang YiNu	Male	32	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Pang Long	Male	66	General employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Peng qi	Female	32	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Pang Hui	Female	43	General Employee	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unknown
Peng Liang	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	Islam	Unmarried
Peng LI	Female	31	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Qi li	Male	62	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Qi Hui	Male	22	Others	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Qiu Yun	Male	27	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Qiu Ting	Male	61	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Ren Ru	Male	31	General Employee	Nanjing	Islam	Unmarried
Ren Niu	Male	32	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Married
Song Ci	Female	68	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Song Shan	Male	43	General Employee	Nanjing	N/A	Unknown
Tang Chao	Male	33	General Employee	Shanghai	Christianity	Unmarried
Tang Hui	Female	32	General Employee	Shanghai	others	Unmarried
Tang Lin	Male	21	Student	Shanghai	Islam	Unmarried
Wang Min	Male	22	Student	Nanjing	Buddhism	Unmarried
Wang Li	Male	67	General Employee	Nanjing	Buddhism	Married
Wang Si	Male	71	General Employee	Changsha	N/A	Married
Wang Yi	Male	68	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Wang Chao	Male	27	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Xia Tian	Female	29	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Xia Min	Male	31	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Xia Hui	Male	32	General Employee	Shanghai	Buddhism	Unmarried
Yang Liu	Female	33	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Yang Te	Male	21	Student	Beijing	N/A	Unmarried
Yang Ma	Male	22	Student	Changsha	N/A	Unmarried
Yang Yuan	Male	64	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	City	Religious Beliefs	Marital Status
Zhang Wei	Male	64	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Zhang Wei	Male	34	General Employee	Beijing	Buddhism	Married
Zhang Liu	Female	34	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Married
Zhang Si	Male	32	General Employee	Shanghai	N/A	Unmarried
Zhang Qiu	Female	63	General Employee	Beijing	Christianity	Married
Zhang kan	Male	62	General Employee	Beijing	N/A	Married
Zhang Wan	Female	41	General Employee	Nanjing	Others	Unknown



APPENDIX III
INTERVIEW OUTLINE

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Questions for tour operators

1. What impact do you think that Chinese tourists bring Thailand's tourism industry?
2. What religious tourist attractions do you usually choose for Chinese tourists? Why?
3. What do you think the purpose of Chinese tourists' visiting religious tourist attractions?
4. In addition to religious tourist attractions, what other tourist attractions do you arrange for Chinese tourists to visit?
5. What are your expectations for religious tourist in Thailand in future?

Questions for guides

1. Are you able to understand Chinese tourists' interests well?
2. Do Chinese tourists would like to know about the history and the cultural background of Thai temples?
3. What are Chinese tourists' favorite temples in Thailand? Why?
4. What are Chinese tourists' favorite shrines in Thailand? Why?
5. What characteristics that Chinese tourists have in their tourism behavior in religious places?
6. Excepting visiting temples, what are Chinese tourists' other tourism activities? What are the characteristics?

Questions for Chinese tourists

1. What do you know about religions in Thailand?
2. What is your purpose to visit Thailand?
3. Do you know any famous temples in Thailand, and which one do you like most?
4. Do you have any other activities besides visiting temples?
5. Do you visit the shrines in Bangkok? Where do you go to most?
6. What were your satisfied and unsatisfied most when you traveled in Thailand?
7. Will you visit religious landmarks in Thailand again? Why?

VITA

Yuxin Jiang was born in Yunnan, China in 1988. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Thai Language from Yunnan University of Nationalities China in 2010. She worked for in the tourist industry in Thailand between 2011 and 2013. She has published her first book Business Chinese: 900 Sentences Thai-Chinese Version by the University of International Business and Economics Press, Beijing, China in 2012.

