

DECLINE OF THE BUDDHIST FUNERAL RITUAL

A case study of the decline of the Buddhist funeral ritual, The Guangdong Yuqie

Yankou

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Abstract

This article contextualizes the decline of the Buddhist death ritual, the Guangdong Yuqie Yankou (廣東瑜伽焰口)¹ through an examination of external and internal factors that might have affected its development in contemporary Hong Kong. During the last two decades, its popularity has dramatically declined, so much so that it now occupies an insignificant place among the pool of local funeral rituals. Its waning is not only a result of changing socio-economic factors, such as contemporary lifestyles, commercialization of the funeral industry, 'fast-food' mortuary practices, and diminished religiosity of the Hong Kong laity, but is also caused by the scarcity of presiding Buddhist masters and competition from Buddhist rituals imported from other provinces of China. These intertwining factors have worked together to foster the decline of the ritual. The data for this ethnographic study were mainly collected in interviews and through the observation of participants.

Keywords: Hong Kong Buddhism, Yankou, Guangdong Yuqie Yankou, death ritual, funeral, religiosity/cosmology

A respected Buddhist monk, Shao Gen (紹根, 1932–), has said, ‘No, Guangdong (*Yankou*) is not going to be around, [it will not be] passed down to future generations . . . and young monks are reluctant to learn it’. At age 83, this Venerable lives in Hong Kong and is one of the few surviving specialists in the Buddhist death ritual,² the *Guangdong Yuqie Yankou*. The master has witnessed its decline and believes that it will not long survive.

Introduction

Guangdong Yuqie Yankou (廣東瑜伽焰口, henceforth *Guangdong Yankou*), the Guangdong style ‘yoga ritual’ for feeding and saving flaming-mouth hungry ghosts, is an indigenized version of the popular Buddhist ritual, the *Yuqie Yankou* (瑜伽焰口) that has been preserved and practiced in the Hong Kong and Guangdong areas. During the era of the British governance of Hong Kong, this Buddhist deliverance ritual of food-bestowal flourished and became part of the lives of many Hong Kong residents. It was popular for both funeral services and auspicious ceremonies until the 1990s.

However, since that time, the popularity of *Guangdong Yankou* has declined year after year. Nowadays, it is even marginalized within the local Buddhist communities. Furthermore, the younger generations of local Buddhist adepts, both monastic and lay, have been less willing to adopt and officiate at the ritual. Witnessing the dramatic decline of the ritual over the past 20 years, most of its monastic experts share Venerable Shao Gen’s pessimistic view of its future.

Why has the popularity of the *Guangdong Yankou* declined significantly in recent years? What are the factors that have driven it to wane? To these questions, the

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common answer, given by both Buddhist monks and professionals in the funerary industry, is the shortage of *sangha* members willing to become specialists in the ritual. Nevertheless, this ethnographic investigation reveals that the lack of new ritual specialists from the local *sangha* does not adequately explain the overall problem. Rather than a mono-causal factor, the decline of the ritual is embedded in a changing socio-economic situation, characterized by contemporary lifestyles, developing trends in the funeral industry and mortuary practices, and the declining religiosity of Hong Kong's population. Moreover, the rise in the popularity of another Buddhist death ritual, the 'Three Periods of Mindfulness' ceremony (*sanshi xinian*, 三時繫念), has diminished the religious function of *Guangdong Yankou* for lay Buddhists. While examining these factors, this paper does not focus on the doctrinal and textual aspects of the Buddhist ritual; instead, it illuminates the context of the dramatic decline of *Guangdong Yankou* in contemporary Hong Kong through an examination of the external and internal socio-economic factors responsible for it.

A portrayal of Guangdong *Yankou*

What is Yuqie Yankou?

Yuqie Yankou is a Buddhist food-bestowal ritual, performed to liberate hungry ghosts or 'flaming mouths' (焰口) from their thirst, hunger, and suffering in the lower realm by providing them with food and Buddhist teachings through visualizations, mantras, and *mudrās*. The merits from these offerings are often redirected toward the fulfilment of the wishes of the sponsor(s) of the ritual.

Yuqie (瑜伽) is the Chinese phonetic translation of the term yoga, where the ritual's adept synchronizes his physical, verbal, and mental actions to promote

spiritual growth and power. It is a type of esoteric Buddhist practice that simultaneously uses hand gestures (*mudrās*), chanting of spells (*mantras*), and visualizations (*samadhi*) to generate the transformative power that enables the officiating adepts to achieve instantly the state of a Bodhisattva or Buddhahood and to acquire supernatural power to bless and transform the salvific food and sweet dew so that they can be consumed by the hungry ghosts, who are also instructed in Dharma teachings (Orzech 2002, 222–3). This esoteric Buddhist practice of feeding hungry ghosts can be traced back to ‘The Discourse of the Buddha on the *Dhāraṇī* for Saving the Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghosts’ (*Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing*, 佛說救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經)³ of Amoghvajra (705–774) in the Tang Dynasty, which states that much merit can be gained from offering food to *yankou*, the flaming-mouths, as these suffering beings spurt flames from their mouths because of thirst and hunger.

Yuqie Yankou may be the only remnant of Tang esoteric Buddhism in China today (Hun 2011, 561). The ritual was transmitted to different regions of China. Its chants, background music, ritual scriptures, and operatic sequences were indigenized and eventually developed into different regional versions of the ritual.

The Distinctive Guangdong Style Yuqie Yankou

The Guangdong style of *Yuqie Yankou* has distinct cultural attributes, which differ from those of provincial counterparts in Mainland China and Taiwan. One of the salient features of the Guangdong style is its operatic recitation and hymn chanting, both of which are conducted in Cantonese by specialists from the Guangdong Buddhist lineages. Other unique features encompass the ritual’s performance sequence, its symbolic paraphernalia, and the training and initiation ceremony of new

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presiding masters (jiachi, 加持).⁴ These elements are mostly absent in its provincial counterparts. For instance, in the Guangdong style, prior to ascending onto the lotus throne, presiding masters must unfold and hold up their *kāṣāya* robes as a gesture of receiving Avalokiteśvara's Bodhisattva prostration (*ding li*, 頂禮). Ritual specialists of the Guangdong style are told by their masters that Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, intending to benefit all sentient beings, once promised to prostrate to anyone who mastered *Yuqie Yankou*. Since nobody, including ritual specialists, is praiseworthy enough to receive the Bodhisattva's prostration, the *kāṣāya* robe then becomes the substitute. With distinct features like this, *Guangdong Yankou* has been recognized as one of the best representations of the unique Guangdong Buddhist tradition.

Although the most popular Buddhist deliverance funeral rituals in contemporary Hong Kong are dominated by the traditions of the outer provinces, the *Guangdong Yankou* prevailed twenty years ago. At that time, both Buddhists who had taken refuge in the Triple Gems and ordinary Chinese citizens who practised Chinese popular religion employed it.⁵ Despite the declining popularity of *Guangdong Yankou*, Venerable Shao Gen has stated that the ritual in Hong Kong may be the only one that has been continuously practised without interruption, since in Mainland China, continuity would most likely have been broken during the Cultural Revolution.

Today, those who employ the ritual in Hong Kong are mostly above the age of 50, and they usually refer to *Guangdong Yankou* by its monikers, such as *zuolian* (坐蓮, sitting on the lotus throne), *niushouhua* (扭手花, making hand gestures), or *fang yankou* (放焰口, liberating the flaming-mouth). Basically, most Hong Kong residents regard *Guangdong Yankou* as one of many death rituals, or *dazhai* (打齋), that can be employed during the mourning period.

Existing Studies of *Yuqie Yankou*

Traditionally, scholars of Chinese Buddhism have focused on doctrinal issues rather than on rituals (McRae 1995, 354–71). However, in recent years, academic studies of *Yuqie Yankou* have gradually increased. Charles D. Orzech (1996) was the first scholar to translate into English the *sūtra*, ‘The Buddha’s Discourse on the Scripture of the Spell for Saving the Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghosts’, from which contemporary *Yankou* liturgical texts are drawn. He (2000) and Zheng (2007) have investigated the musicological aspects of the *Yankou* liturgies. More recently, historical and textual studies of the ritual have become the themes of researchers, as exemplified in the works of Hun (2011, 2003) and Chen (2012), whose studies focus on the history and evolution of the liturgical texts and the esoteric Buddhist meanings of *Yankou* liturgies. Moreover, through cross-religious comparisons, Orzech (2002, 214–234) distinguishes the essential differences of *Fang Yankou* (放餒口) and Namō Daoist *Pudu* (普度) rituals. Similarly, Yuan (2013) studies *Yankou* through the lenses of musicology, history, and symbolism and compares it with the Namō Daoist ritual of food-bestowal. Although *Guangdong Yankou* is a unique branch of *Yuqie Yankou* and a living ritual, the scholastic interest in it of Buddhist studies is much less obvious. Hun (2003) mentions *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong in his studies of *Yuqie Yankou* in the Ming-Qing dynasties; however, he does not discuss its current condition in detail.

Research Methodology and Research Field Sites

In collecting data, this research employed an ethnographic research methodology.

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Fieldwork was carried out from January 2012 to April 2014 and was framed by the limited performances of the ritual nowadays. Data were mainly collected through interviews and participant-observation at funeral parlours, religious organizations, and Buddhist ceremonial sites where *Guangdong Yankou* was being performed.

The interviewees included all major participants in the ritual, namely, bereaved family members, visiting mourners, agents or professionals in the funerary industry, and Buddhist specialists. These Buddhist specialists included both monastic and lay presiding masters. Most monastic masters were associated with a monastery and/or a Dharma centre, while lay presiding masters were mostly affiliated with lay religious organizations.

According to the monastic *Guangdong Yankou* specialist, Jian Zhao (健釗, 1946-) of the Po Lin Monastery, in the 1970s there were more than seven monasteries and Dharma centres with monastic specialists that offered the *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong in the 1970s. They included the Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺); the Ling Yan Monastery (靈隱寺); the Chuk Lam Sim Yuen (竹林禪院); a branch of the Yin Cheung Monastery (延祥分院); the Pu Ti Monastery (菩提寺); and the Wan Shan Monastery (萬善寺); however, only the first three monasteries continue to exist today.

As for lay practitioners, Aunt Xuan, who is the senior *Guangdong Yankou* specialist of Chung Yum Fat To She (松蔭園佛道社, henceforth Chung Yum) that knows well about the practice and historical development of *Guangdong Yankou*, there were more than five religious organizations with lay masters of the ritual, including the Chung Yum Yuen Fat To She, the Chuk Yan Cheung Chun Tung Association (竹隱長春洞), the Lily Garden Buddhism Association Limited (蓮苑佛

社), and the Bun Ha Tung Association Limited (寶霞洞) in the 1980s; of these, only the first two organizations still offer the *Guangdong Yankou* today.

During the course of collecting data, we were able to observe at first-hand the *Guangdong Yankou* being performed at lay religious organization and the Po Lin Monastery, as well as at the annual ‘Ancestral Worship Ceremony of the Ching Ming Festival’ (清明思親法會).⁶ In particular, we collected data at Chung Yum in Mong Kok, the city centre of Kowloon, where we interviewed both bereaved families and ritual specialists. Other field sites included the Universal Funeral Parlour and the Kowloon Funeral Parlour.⁷ Many of the interviews were carried out during funerals or memorial services with bereaved family members or visiting mourners.

The popularity and decline of *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong

From the 1950s to the late 1980s, *Guangdong Yankou* was one of the most popular religious rituals in Hong Kong; it was performed at either red events (*hongshi*, 紅事), auspicious occasions, or white events (*baishi*, 白事) such as funerary, mourning, or commemorative occasions. The ritual’s popularity steadily rose in Hong Kong beginning in the 1950s,⁸ which were marked by increasingly stabilized societal conditions under British governance. According to Jian Zhao, the ritual prevailed in Hong Kong and Macau⁹ in the 1950s and 1960s. Because of its popularity during those years, the Venerable, as a *Guangdong Yankou* apprentice in 1958, had to undertake a heavy workload night after night. As he recalls: ‘I could not help falling asleep on the altar table, the [liturgical] work lasted from nightfall to daybreak, and [*Guangdong*] *Yankou* was the final part [of the ceremony], usually performed before the dawn, . . . so in the end, even my master had difficulty waking me up’ [laughter].

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By the 1980s, the ritual had reached its golden age in Hong Kong, as both Buddhists and non-Buddhists sought to foster wellbeing by employing it to accumulate merit and/or the transference of blessings for a variety of purposes, such as births, job searches, birthdays, house-warnings, and funerals. Existing monastic specialists can still vividly remember that during this golden era of *Guangdong Yankou*, they were horrified by having to conduct the ritual repeatedly and continuously every day, a period they refer to as ‘*Yankou horror*’ (*yankou jingyun*, 焰口驚魂).

Similarly, in the late 1980s, the lay specialists of Chung Yum performed at least one daily *Yankou* liturgy throughout the year. Aunt Xuan, the senior *Guangdong Yankou* specialist of Chung Yum, humorously told us of their difficulty in taking a day of rest: ‘We always hoped that we could have a holiday’. Their wish came true as the popularity of *Guangdong Yankou* began to fade away in Hong Kong in the early 1990s. The specialists of Chung Yum became progressively less busy, as fewer local people required their services.

During the research period from 2012 to 2014, the performance frequency of the ritual was far below that of the 1980s; for instance, there were about 35 to 40 monthly performances of the ritual in Chung Yum in the 1980s,¹⁰ but today it is carried out only five to seven times a month. Moreover, there were approximately 23 male monastic *Guangdong Yankou* specialists in the 1960s and 13 in 1980s, while the number of lay specialists was around 22. However, in 2014, only eight male monastic specialists—four have recently retired—and fewer than 20 lay specialists remained.

The decline in the popularity of *Guangdong Yankou* began in the early 1990s and is continuing today. During these two decades, many senior specialists have passed

away, socio-economic conditions have altered, other Buddhist and Namo Daoist funeral rituals have become more popular, and funeral parlours and funeral services have become more commercialized. All these factors have worked together to undermine the prevalence of *Guangdong Yankou*. In the following sections, these reasons and their intricacies will be analysed and examined in turn.

External socio-economic factors contributing to the decline of *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong

The hectic and demanding lifestyle of Hong Kong residents

Hong Kong, a cosmopolitan financial hub, is famous for its efficiency and fast pace. Diligence and application are the ethos of the local people. A hectic lifestyle and busy daily routines are the norms of most residents (Mathews 2001, 301). This mode of life is ubiquitous in every sector of the society, including funeral and mourning services, and has contributed to the decline of *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong.

Currently, bereaved families in Hong Kong spend about five to seven days on funerals and in mourning. One to two days are needed to complete all the legal formalities of death registration. Another one to two days are required to co-ordinate and finalize the funeral arrangements, that is, discussions with the undertakers of funeral parlours or coffin shops. Moreover, families must spend at least one night at funeral services and another day escorting corpses to crematoria. If bereaved family members intend to hold one or more follow-up mourning rituals, extra days would be needed. The more rituals, the more work leave one has to take.

We noticed that members of bereaved families were quite concerned with the

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duration of rituals. ‘Going to work’ (返工, *fangong*) and ‘taking leave’ (請假, *qingjia*) were two of the upmost concerns of bereaved family members. They feared that their work progress and efficiency would be negatively affected, which would ultimately annoy their employers. In all the interviews, ‘going to work’ was often spontaneously emphasized and was taken into account by the attendees of the rituals. The elders of families understandably knew that ‘everyone needs to work’. If family members could not attend some post-funeral memorial services, their absences were accepted. Most family members usually were present for legal formalities, during the main funeral service, and maybe for one more follow-up mourning ritual; however, additional mourning rituals received less interest because of the limit of available annual holidays and presumably the expectations of employers. For these reasons, in follow-up services, we encountered mostly retired and old people, who coordinated and attended the memorial services.

Aunt Xuan, the ritual specialist of Chung Yum, shared her observations on the behaviours of bereaved family members. She said, ‘Bosses understand that their [employees’] need to deal with white affairs and they normally allow [leaves], but they are not happy to see jobs being left too long’. She added, ‘Unlike two or three decades ago, nowadays Hong Kong people do not dare to ask for leave. Bosses do not like employees taking long leave, so they [the bereaved] are afraid to take leave sometimes’. For these reasons, bereaved family members normally expect to finish their funerary duties as soon as possible.

Moreover, another concern about follow-up rituals is the cost. Regardless of the religious affiliation of Chinese-style funeral rituals, a liturgical performance or a mourning service costs approximately 9,500 to 20,000 Hong Kong dollars (roughly

US \$1,220 to US \$2,560 in 2014), depending on the number of specialists involved. In addition, other funeral parlour or coffin shop expenses include coffins, ritual offerings, paper objects for burning, funeral halls and decorations, transportation, suitable clothing for the deceased, standardized mourning garb for the bereaved, lucky envelopes, rite instructors (堂倌, *tang-guan*),¹¹ and miscellaneous items. Therefore, all in all, the general cost for a funeral service ranges from approximately from 25,000 to 60,000 Hong Kong dollars (roughly US \$3,200 to US \$7,690 at the 2014 exchange rate), with variations in price because of coffin materials, the quantity of the offered items, the number of ritual specialists, and so on. However, the price of a funeral service has no upper limit. The more mourning rituals performed, the higher the overall cost for the bereaved. The extra expenses of post-funeral follow-up services are a luxury and determined by the financial condition and time constraints of each family. Lay ritual specialists from Chung Yum revealed that contemporary bereaved families usually budgeted less for funerary matters and paid for a one-off funeral service, without follow-up rituals.

Commercialization of the funeral industry

In response to the hectic and demanding life style of Hong Kong residents, local funeral parlours have repackaged and streamlined customarily lengthy and elaborate funerary practices by providing all-in-one packaged services (Chan 2003, 148). Such changes in funeral services, particularly the standardization and simplification of funerary rituals, intertwined with the commercialization of the funeral industry, have put the more religious and less secular oriented *Guangdong Yankou* at a disadvantage. Exemplified in a detailed report by Chan Yuk Wah (2003), the commercialization of

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the funerary industry rapidly expanded after the late 1980s and has continued until today. In general, a standardized and simplified funerary sequence has been adopted and encouraged by professionals in the funeral industry. In Hong Kong, because of legal regulations¹² and limited available space, the majority of funeral services have to be conducted in one of seven licensed funeral parlours,¹³ which are mostly run on a commercial basis.¹⁴ Seeking simplification and efficiency, funeral professionals, under the intensified competitive environment within the industry, have trimmed lengthy and elaborate funeral services that can go on for weeks. Packaged funeral services include basic funeral services and materials, such as funerary clothing, food and paper offerings, joss sticks, the coffin, the specialists, and ceremonial supplies for memorial religious rituals (Chan 2003, 147–8). Memorial services include some kind of religious funeral ritual, followed by next-day cremation of the body. This simplified funeral service package not only frees bereaved family members from complicated and trivial matters, but also saves them time by reducing or omitting post-funeral rituals. Current funeral rituals have been simplified by merging and condensing different traditional rituals into a one-night programme, namely, the chanting of *daotoujing* (倒頭經, *Sūtra for the Dead*) and the *dazhai* (打齋).

For the Cantonese of Hong Kong, the term *dazhai* (打齋) means ‘to conduct a penitential and purifying ritual’; it specifically refers to funeral rituals performed by Namo Daoist or Buddhist clergies. In Cantonese, *da* means ‘to do’ and *zhai* denotes ‘purifying the body and mind as well as confessing *zui* (罪, evil deeds)’ (Chen and Zhou 2013, 147). *Dazhai* is normally performed on the seventh day after a person’s death and often repeated seven times within a forty-nine day period. These seventh-day memorial services were dominated by Guangdong Yankou before the

1990s, but no longer. Today, many of the funeral industry professionals suggested that bereaved families adopt simplified services, even though they know that more traditional services would include more steps and be more 'complete'.

Chinese popular religion, an inseparable part of everyday life in Hong Kong, is loosely organized and characterized by minimal ritualistic and religious formality (Chan 2001). Therefore, its lay devotees generally have limited knowledge of funeral or mourning rituals; they normally show no preference as to the type of death ritual that should be performed. Thus, they rely on the expertise and advice given by the professionals at funeral parlours or coffin shops. Very often, these professionals and agents introduce them to Namo Daoist rituals, which are potentially more profitable. Why are they preferable to the agents or personnel of funeral parlours? What is the relationship between the parlours and the Namo Daoist specialists?

The rise of the Namo Daoist ritual

Buddhist Yankou and Namo Daoist specialists¹⁵ both offer services to devotees of Chinese popular religion. Since there is a reciprocal commission rebate understanding between sales agents of funeral parlours and coffin shops and Namo Daoist specialists, there is a strong tendency for agents to recommend the latter. Furthermore, the sales agents consider Namo Daoist specialists more cooperative. Mr Feng, an experienced coffin shop sales agent and a self-proclaimed funeral planner, explained this preference:

Namo Daoists are more cooperative; they are flexible with our requests. Whenever we want to prolong a ceremony or do something else because of family requests, the Namo Daoists are usually agreeable, but monks and nuns

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often insist on their own ways . . . You know, we need to serve the needs of the families . . . To be straightforward about it, Namo Daoists are able to work together with us to make money.

In another case, an experienced manager of *tanggians*, Mr Yuan, casually stated, ‘the [funerary] industry actually has been seriously distorted by commercialization, especially the sales agents; if they can make profits by finding Christian priests, they will definitely do so . . . whichever [funeral ritual] allows them to earn more, that is the one they will use’. According to the data provided by insiders from the funerary industry, Namo Daoist death rituals accounted for 50–60% of all such rites in Hong Kong during 2013. Buddhist monastics tend not to engage in commercial relationships; they are thus less likely to be recommended by funeral agents. Hence, the popularity of Buddhist rituals, including *Guangdong* or provincial *Yankou*, has declined.

‘Fast-food’ funerary practices of the bereaved

The ongoing commercialization of the funeral industry and the local demand for efficiency have gradually led to and reinforced a shorter funeral timeframe of two days for the bereaved. Consequently, a ‘fast-food’ mortuary practice has been created.

As reported by Watson (1988, 2004) and Wilson (1961), Chinese funeral rituals and practices are remarkably complex and elaborate. As discussed above, funerals and subsequent mourning rituals, when practiced according to tradition, last for many days, forty-nine in all.¹⁶ Apart from these services, surviving descendants can carry out mourning rituals on the one hundredth day *zuobairi* (做

百日) and one year *zuoduinian* (做對年) after the death of a loved one. *Guangdong Yankou* can be performed on each of the ‘seventh-days’ discussed earlier in this paper. Retired lay ritual specialists Aunt Xuan from Chung Yum and Aunt Bao from the Bun Ha Tung Association Limited told us that, during the 1960s and 1970s, some wealthy families would actually follow this custom and conduct rituals on all of these days. For ordinary families, a funeral plus memorial services on the fifth seventh-day and the last seventh-day were normally requested (Wilson 1961, 119).

Now, these elaborate funeral and mourning activities have been simplified and standardized. A *tangguan* manager, Mr Yuan, with more than thirty years work experience, pointed out that a ‘fast-food’ culture has penetrated the entire funeral industry. Insiders characterized the simplified practice as *kuaiqi* (快七, quick seven) because ‘they [the bereaved families] do *baishi* (白事, white affairs) as if they are eating fast food, and they want to complete it [the funeral) quickly without may complications’. In short, most bereaved families do not carry out all the seventh-day rituals and end the customary forty-nine days mourning period much earlier.

These simplified *kuaiqi* practices normally last two days, with the chanting of *daotoujing* and performance of a Buddhist or Daoist deliverance ritual on the first night, which is also called *shouye* (守夜, funerary vigil). The conventional *shouye*, in which bereaved family members stay awake the whole night to accompany the deceased before the encoffining of the corpse, has also been simplified. In today’s Hong Kong, most bereaved families normally conclude the funerary vigils before midnight. When we carried out fieldwork at the Universal Funeral Parlour, the majority of bereaved families left the funeral halls around 9:30 pm and most of the halls were empty before 11:00 pm.

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Furthermore, many bereaved family members completed the mourning obligation *daixiao* (戴孝, carrying the filial piety duty) immediately after the cremation, which today occurs on the day following the funerary vigil. They were immediately released from the duty of filial piety, *tuoxiao* (脫孝), by treating family members and friends to a *yinghong* banquet (即時纓紅, *jishi yinghong*, ‘have a red banquet immediately’)¹⁷ right after the cremation or burial. The colour red is usually associated with luck, liveliness, and propitiousness in Chinese culture. Having a red feast signifies an auspicious turn from un-prosperous and regrettable white affairs. After the banquet, bereaved family members can reintegrate into normal life, with the ending of misfortune and misery. In the past, the period of mourning and the wearing of mourning apparel could last from forty-nine days to a total of three years after the death of parents.

However, as a consequence of the penetration of the ‘fast-food’ funerary culture, the mourning period has been shortened, which inevitably has led to a reduction of post-funeral mourning rituals. We noticed that mourning rituals were simply skipped or omitted by most bereaved families; they merely employed a *dazhai* service during the main funeral, without any subsequent rituals. Some families, who failed to perform a ceremony during the funeral, simply supplemented the mourning obligation with a ritual on the third or fifth seventh-day at the Namo Daoist or Buddhist halls outside funeral parlours. A bereaved mother, Mrs. Chan, and her son Tommy insisted on the conventional *zuoqi* for the deceased. Mr Chan told us that many of their friends did not closely follow the traditional custom: ‘Honestly they did not complete it [the *dazhai*] fully. . . . Most of them have only one ritual at the funeral parlour; that is it. After that, they release themselves from [mourning] duty; they did not do much. They

felt okay to put an end to the funeral service by sending the coffin to cremation the next day’.

The Secularization of Hong Kong: the decline of traditional religious values and beliefs

The de-religiosity of the bereaved

The reduction or omission of mourning rituals leads us to speculate whether the well-being of deceased spirits in the afterlife remains the main concern of the bereaved. What is the primary concern of the bereaved as they perform funeral rituals for the deceased? How do they perceive the funeral rituals and their functions and effects on the deceased? To answer these questions, we explore the changing cosmology¹⁸ of Hong Kong people in this section.

The ritualized behaviours and activities of a community embody the cosmology and practice of religious practitioners (Bell 1997). With the development of a ‘fast-food’ funeral culture and the early termination of mourning obligations, one would expect to find a change in this cosmology, which would in turn influence devotional, funerary, and mourning activities.

We easily came across bereaved individuals with thin, attenuated, or non-existent religiosities.¹⁹ They deny life after death and do not believe in and accept the religious functions of Chinese death rituals, including the *Guangdong Yankou*. As a result, they tend to participate less in the post-funeral mourning activities. We contend that this fading religiosity has played a crucial role in dwindling of *Guangdong Yankou*. In our interviews with bereaved individuals and families participating in

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Guangdong Yankou, we found three categories: lay Buddhists, non-Buddhists who are devoted practitioners of Chinese popular religion, and those with relatively thin or non-existent religious faith, such as sceptics, agnostics, and atheists. All three types of people can employ *Guangdong Yankou*.

Lay Buddhists are more devoted to death rituals, since they affirm the Buddhist cosmology of reincarnation and the belief that the deceased will benefit from the *gongde* (功德, merits) accumulated through the performance of funeral and mourning rituals. Through the vigorous cultivation of merits, they seek rebirth in *Sukhāvātī*, the western Pure Land of Amitābha, for the deceased and themselves (Chan 2008, 210–39).²⁰ However, at present in Hong Kong, Buddhists are mostly absorbed in the most popular Buddhist death ritual, the ‘Three Periods of Mindfulness’ ceremony (see below).

Likewise, the pious practitioners of popular religion are willing to follow the traditional mourning custom of seventh-day rituals. They not only aim to help the deceased attain a better afterlife in the underworld through the merit of the rituals, but they also seek that he or she becomes an honoured ‘ancestor’ (祖先, *zuxian*) (Watson 2004, 366–67). Nevertheless, both lay Buddhists and the devoted bereaved are uncommonly encountered in *Guangdong Yankou* nowadays.

Unlike these two groups, those with thin or no religiosity generally disbelieve in life after death and regard death rituals, both Buddhist or Namo Daoist, and ritual specialists as ineffective and their function as unverifiable. To them, ritual specialists are merely performers, and funeral or mourning rituals are conducted for the living rather than for deceased spirits, ghosts, or gods of other worlds. They do not give much thought to the afterlife or underworld, despite their willingness to attend the

rituals. In the cosmology of atheists, nothing follows death. Attending her grandmother's mourning ritual, Ms Xu distinctly and explicitly asserted, 'Being dead means the end; indeed means that it is the end, yes; there is nothing more for me after the end. I will not arise again into anything else'. Likewise, Mr Wong, who with his wife attended a *Guangdong Yankou* ceremony for his dead father at the 'Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Ching Ming Festival', asserted, 'I don't believe in ancestral spirits remaining [in the afterlife]. I never think of those things [life after death]'. He came to commemorate his father, but not through religious belief. He emphasized his disbelief in ancestors, and rejected the Chinese customary belief that they bestow blessings on their descendants. With these views, such people renounce and forsake traditional funeral and mourning rituals for their own future deaths, and firmly instruct their children not to employ them. Thus, Mr Cheung, a sixty year old father, stated:

I often tell them [my son and daughter] to be nice to their parents when they are alive, do not wait until they are dead and then be nice to them. What if my wife and I die in an accident tomorrow? I have told them that there is no need to perform any ritual; they are not needed. It is fine [for me] to go straight in and out of the hospital [skipping the funeral]. . . . I do not need any rites; in fact. . . I myself do not trust those things. . . . I had better go directly in and out of the hospital. By meeting the schedule of cremation, I will be done, after scattering my ashes. I feel fine if my children do not come to worship me. If they do worship, I would never feel anything.

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Many bereaved family members shared these atheistic views and, most likely, their numbers have been steadily increasing.

The duty of filial piety

Why do these lay mourners with thin religiosity still arrange and attend religious funeral or mourning rituals? In spite of the varied cosmologies of bereaved family members, most participate in the same funeral rituals or mourning practices. In our ethnographic examination, we found that a person who took part in *Guangdong Yankou* during a funeral or mourning period was not necessarily religious. Instead, the duty of filial piety (*xiao*, 孝)²¹ and the search for peace of mind, expressed as *xinan lide* (心安理得), motivated them. More precisely, it is the peace of mind that comes from knowing that the duty of filial piety has been fulfilled.

Therefore, filial piety remains the primary concern in *Guangdong Yankou* and other death rituals (Goossaert and Palmer 2011, 224–38). In particular, filial piety is important to the bereaved family members on three levels:²²

(1) the individual level, ‘the subjective sentiment and feeling of obligation to one’s parents’. In this study, the majority of bereaved sons or daughters regarded *Yankou* as a means to bid farewell, commemorate the dead, and to express their filial love. Hence, the religious ritual is a means for the individual to feel that he or she has fulfilled his or her filial duty and to gain peace of mind.

(2) The parent-child level, namely ‘the relationship between parents and their children, filtered through the parental evaluation of filial piety’.²³ We interviewed a few sceptical sons or daughters in this study. Although they denied the religious

function of the rituals or even grumbled about their efficacy, they participated in them because of the wishes of a deceased father or mother and to please other loved ones. Let us take the above-mentioned pious daughter of Ms Xu as an instance once again. Ms. Xu helped her mother, whom she loved, to fulfil her grandmother's wish to adopt the *Guangdong Yankou* as a mourning ritual. She said, 'After all we are a family; my mom wants to do this, and I second her wish and accommodate her, help her, assist her to complete this wish . . . I do not necessarily feel that holding this [*Yankou* liturgy] is good for my grandma; instead, it's good for my mom because she has settled her wish'.

(3) The social level is 'how one's expectation of being perceived and evaluated by a broader society as filial'.²⁴ Thus, 'Chinese people do not just need to be filial, they have to be seen as filial' (Chan 2003, 153). Although bereaved individuals asserted their distrust of the religious power of the *Guangdong Yankou*, they stated that they had to participate in the ritual, since it was a collective activity of their families. In this sense, *Guangdong Yankou* and, perhaps, other death rituals are mainly regarded as a reason to assemble the bereaved family.

From the above discussion, we can see that the main determining factors that influence bereaved family members in funeral and memorial services are filial piety and religiosity. Those with strong filial piety but a weaker sense of religiosity considered *Guangdong Yankou* as a ceremonial for the living but not for the dead. Rather than emphasizing benefit in the afterlife, which is unknown, mystical, invisible, and questionable, they focused on the quality of family life.

Since the duty of filial piety remains the central drive for many de-spiritualized bereaved persons to participate in death rituals and since these people are not inclined

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to adhere to traditional after-death practices, we estimate that in the foreseeable future, traditional Chinese rituals, including the *Guangdong Yankou*, are unlikely to be performed; consequently, the weakened status of *Guangdong Yankou* will persist and worsen.

Factors inside the Buddhist circle

The scarcity of monastic members in Guangdong Buddhist lineages

Apart from the socio-economic factors already discussed, the principal threat to the survival and further development of *Guangdong Yankou* is the aging and shortage of ritual specialists. Since the 1990s, many monastic patriarchs, skilled in the ritual, have passed away, and new recruits are scarce. We discovered just eight monastic masters of *Guangdong Yankou* in Hong Kong. Four of them still perform the ritual publicly, whilst the rest have retired. What makes it so hard to find and nurture new monastic specialists of the ritual in Hong Kong?

In contemporary Hong Kong, the lack of newly ordained monks has been a lingering concern of the Buddhist *sangha*, especially among the local Guangdong Buddhist lineages. The data (shown in Table 1) provided by the Po Lin Monastery²⁵ reveals that only 14, 27, and 16 local males took part in its ordination ceremony in 2002, 2005, and 2014, respectively. Of this limited number of new monks, only a few showed an interest in learning liturgical rituals; the majority preferred the intellectual and meditative domains of study and practice. This tendency reflects the two categories of monastics, formed under the influence of scientism,²⁶ of the Chinese Buddhist *sangha* in Hong Kong, reinforced by the intellectual impact of ‘Humanistic Buddhism’. In particular, ‘Humanistic Buddhism’, advocated and propagated by the

reformist monk *Taixu* (太虛, 1890–1947) in the early 20th century, heavily criticised Chinese Buddhism's excessive emphasis on ghosts and funeral services as well as its financial reliance on Buddhist liturgies in the Ming-Qing Dynasties. It regards liturgies as a major malady that impedes the modernization and propagation of Chinese Buddhism. This critical approach towards liturgical rituals has continued until today, and has led to an excessive belittling on liturgical monastics. Because of the subtle influence of 'Humanistic Buddhism', the differentiation between scholastic monastics and liturgical monastics prevails in the Chinese Sangha of Hong Kong.²⁷

Scholastic monastics tend to focus on the study and promotion of Buddhist doctrines, philosophy, and meditative techniques, which the younger generation of Buddhists consider a more noble way to learn and practise Buddhism. In contrast, liturgical monastics serve lay people by performing liturgies, on which they depend for their living. Moreover, many consider the performance of religious rituals mystical and even superstitious, while regarding the scholastic path as scientific, rational, and informed (Sik 2014). This value judgment is commonly shared by younger local monastics and lay Buddhists; consequently, liturgical monastics are less well regarded, despite their numerous contributions to both the *sangha* and society, for example through charitable fundraising, liturgical services, and so forth. Under this circumstance, the younger generation of local monastics is rarely interested in learning Buddhist rituals, including the *Guangdong Yankou*; instead, most tend to become *sūtra* preachers, meditation practitioners, or instructors (Sik 2014). Patriarch Jian Zhao of the Po Lin Monastery has observed this trend and stated:

Although there are young monastics in Hong Kong, they feel disdain for the practise of Buddhist liturgies; they consider themselves noble and

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very virtuous. If they do not study meditation, then they study *sūtra* and preaching; none of them become monks to learn Buddhist liturgies and chanting. [Only if] they see no other options, will they perform the ‘three periods of mindfulness ceremony’ (三時繫念), confessional rituals of repentance (拜懺, *baichan*) and so on. They would just take it as a job and not as the function of a devoted professional. It is now difficult to find a master with expertise and the techniques of chanting and liturgies.

[Table 1 here]

The rise and popularity of the ‘Three Periods’

At the same time, the rise in popularity of another Buddhist death ritual, the ‘Three Periods of Mindfulness’ ceremony, (*sanshi xinian*, 三時繫念, henceforth ‘Three Periods’),²⁸ an Amitābha Pure Land Buddhist ceremonial practice, propagated by Tiantai (天台宗) and the Pure-land schools, contributed to the waning of the *Guangdong Yankou*. The ‘Three Periods’ consists of chanting the name of Amitābha and the *Sūtra of Amitabha Buddha*. This ritual seeks the rebirth of the dead in the Amitābha Pure-land and the end of their samsaric migrations. (Ciyi 1989, 598–9). It is often performed in funerary vigils. While funeral parlours and agents divert followers of Chinese popular religion to Namō Daoist rituals, the ‘Three Periods’ has become the prevalent death ritual among lay Buddhists. In fact, local Buddhists, with their own religious cosmological system, consistently employ such ceremonies. Mr Yuan, an experienced manager of rite instructors, estimated that ‘Three Periods’ accounted for 90% of Buddhist death rituals, and 15% of all funeral rituals, in 2013.

The ‘Three Periods’ was brought to Hong Kong by *Dingxi* (定西, 1895–1962) in

the 1950s. *Dingxi*, *Tanxu* (倓虛, 1875–1963), and *Guole* (果樂, 1884–1979) were the three eminent Tiantai patriarchs from Mainland China, locally referred to as *Dongbei Sanlao* (東北三老, the three patriarchs from the North-East).²⁹ They propagated the Tiantai School by setting up Buddhist institutes and promoting scholastic monasticism in Hong Kong during the 1950s. Compared with ‘Humanistic Buddhism’, the scholasticism of Tiantai school has adopted a relatively gentle attitude towards Buddhist liturgies and ritual specialists, although it also discourages monks from relying on ritual services for money. Even so, scholastic monastics are more respected in the school.³⁰

In terms of expertise, the performance of the *Guangdong Yankou* is more difficult and demands a higher level of concentration and visualization than that of the ‘Three Periods’. It is easier for scholastic monastics to master the ‘Three Periods’, given that they are more interested in study and meditation than in funeral services. Furthermore, the practice of the ‘Three Periods’ was encouraged by the venerated scholastic monk *Dingxi*, as well as the followers of the lineage such as *Yongxing* (永惺, 1926–) and *Huanyun* (寬運, 1964–). Because of the support of *Dingxi*, his fellows, and the young disciples of the lineage, the popularity of ‘Three Periods’ has steadily grown within the local Buddhist community, in contrast to the continuous decline of *Guangdong Yankou*.³¹

During the last decade, the practice of ‘Three Periods’ has no longer been confined to the Tiantai School; rather, it has become popular among all the other schools of Chinese Buddhism in Hong Kong. A Buddhist nowadays can invite monks from the Po Lin Monastery, a Chan monastery, to perform the ‘Three Periods’ for a deceased loved one. Under these circumstances, the ‘Three Periods’ has gained wide

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support among local Buddhists.

Conclusion

This research has studied the external socioeconomic factors and the internal factors of the Buddhist community that have worked together to foster the decline of the Buddhist death ritual the *Guangdong Yankou* in contemporary Hong Kong. The development of a ritual never stands on its own. In the course of time, its ups and downs correspond to complex social and economic realities, such as lifestyles, attitudes, practices, and so forth (Bell 1997, 210–52). Ritual interacts with multiple social components in a process comprised of successive phases of development (Kelly and Kaplan 1990). This research has thus provided a wider picture of the current predicament of the *Guangdong Yankou*.

Ritualized memorial services often change, as stakeholders come under the dynamic pressure of socio-economic cultural factors. In this case, bereaved family members, funeral professionals, and Namo Daoist specialists have all been influenced by the ever more competitive economic environment of Hong Kong. Commercialized and fast-food funeral services, a deteriorating religiosity, and the secularization of the cosmology of bereaved family members have worked together to foster the decline of *Guangdong Yankou*. At the same time, within the Buddhist community, the shortage of ritual apprentices and the competition from another popular Buddhist ritual the ‘Three Periods’, has furthered its waning.

Apart from depicting the contexts that have led to the decline of *Guangdong Yankou*, we could not help but noticing the decline in religiosity among the people

that we interviewed. However, we also observed that the Confucian teaching of filial piety is still very much a virtue that most attempt to uphold. Do these observations hold for the overall Hong Kong population? What explains the existence of these phenomena? These interesting questions are beyond the scope of this paper. Future researchers may want to investigate how the modernization of a society influences core values, such as the filial piety and religiosity of its citizens.

By widening the spectrum and context of investigation, this study offers a method to better understand how the popularity of rituals, festivals, or practices of Chinese Buddhism has undergone vicissitudes under the influence of both large- and small-scale factors.

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Endnotes

¹ All Chinese names and terms in this article have been translated into English and Romanized using the Mainland Chinese Hanyu Pinyin standard system, except for the official names of organizations and companies in Hong Kong that have local English spellings. Also, the names of participants in this article are pseudonymous, except for Buddhist monastics.

² In this article, ‘death ritual’ only refers to funeral and mourning rituals. A funeral ritual ‘involves actions undertaken from the moment of death to the formal expulsion of the deceased (in a sealed coffin) from the community’; afterwards, it includes a series of mourning rituals that deal with the deceased spirit (Watson 1988, 12).

³ [provide textual source/published location please]. T21.464b.

⁴ In Chinese, a residing master is a *zhufa* (主法) but is more specifically termed a *jiachi* (加持) in *Guangdong Yankou*. In the provincial style, *Yuqie Yankou*, a *zhufa* is called a *jingang shangshi* (金剛上師).

⁵ Chinese popular religion refers to the religious cults and practices of the commoners in Chinese societies (Teiser 1995). The religiosity of practitioners of Chinese popular religion always has ‘an inclination toward beseeching for practical benefits, especially in times of trouble, and a lack of interest in theologizing and systematization’ (Chau 2006, 242).

⁶ The ‘Ancestral Worship Ceremony in the Ching Ming Festival’ (清明思親法會) refers to the yearly religious function of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association of the Buddhist Wong Fund Ling College at Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

⁷ These two funeral parlours are located in Kowloon, Hong Kong. The Universal Funeral Parlour locates in Hung Hom, Kowloon and the Kowloon Funeral Parlour locates in Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon.

⁸ Shi Yongming (1993), *Buddhism and Monasteries in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Po Lian Monastery), p.70. After the end of the Japanese Occupation (December 1941 to August 1945) of Hong Kong, societal development resumed under the colonial British government, which provided a comparatively safe social environment for immigrants from Mainland China from the late 1940s. Some more information related to the background to Hong Kong Buddhism see Ye Wen Yi (1992), “The Historical Development of Hong Kong Buddhism: from late Qing to 1937” and Guo Wung Shuo (1992), “The History of Hong Kong Buddhism.”

⁹ The Venerable Jian Zhao claimed that there are a few practitioners of *Guangdong Yankou* in Macau nowadays but that their practice is not as well-preserved and complete as it is in Hong Kong.

¹⁰ From interview which was conducted in 2013 with Aunt Xuan, who is the senior Guangdong Yankou specialist of Chung Yum. She told us when she recalled her experience of the ritual performance done in that period.

¹¹ *Tang-guan(s)* (堂倌) are instructors at funeral halls of parlours; they are experts in funerals and often serve to guide the bereaved to follow the proper etiquette.

¹² ‘Restriction upon the keeping of dead bodies in domestic premises’, Section 112, Part XI, Chapter 132 of ‘Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance’, Department of Justice, the Government of The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

¹³ These are funeral parlours registered by the government of Hong Kong, and they are entitled by law to handle corpses. (‘Regulations in relation to mortuaries’, Section 123, Part XI, Chapter 132 of ‘Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance’, Department of Justice, the Government of The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.)

¹⁴ The five commercial funeral parlours include the Hong Kong Funeral Home, the Kowloon Funeral Parlour, the Universal Funeral Parlour, the Grand Peace Funeral Parlour, and the Po Fook Memorial Hall. Run by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the International and Diamond Hill Funeral Parlours provide non-profit funerary services.

¹⁵ According to Lai Chi Tim (Lai 2010, 60, 77–8), the Namo Daoist sect that performs for commercial purposes in funerals in Hong Kong is the Zhenyi School (正一派) out of several denominations of the Chinese Namo Daoist religion.

¹⁶ Except for *touqi* (頭七), another six seventh-days are required as mourning rituals for the deceased. However, some lay people told us that they only perform mourning rituals on the third, fifth, and last day. This variation perhaps emerges because lay Chinese traditionally consider that even numbers belong to death and *yin* (陰), while odd numbers belong to the living and *yang* (陽).

¹⁷ *Yinghong* (纓紅) is the short term of *yinghongyan* (纓紅宴) or *yinghongjiu* (纓紅酒) in Cantonese. *Yinghong* refers to the adornment of the ancestral tablets at the completion of mourning period with gold plated flower and red tassel (簪花掛紅) as an indication that the deceased has become a fulfilled being. The gold plated flower and the red tassel are symbols of good fortune and longevity. [what does this mean? How can a gold metal be made from a red tassel? Please rewrite this sentence more clearly.] Another term for the identical concept is *chuanhong* (穿紅, wearing the red); this was recorded by Watson in the New Territories in 1960s and 1970s (Watson 2004, 366–7).

¹⁸ Cosmology refers to broad ideas and interpretations of the world and relation with other worlds. People behave in accordance with their cosmologies, through which they make sense of reality (Chan 2008).

¹⁹ Religiosity refers to the religious feeling or experience of individual believers (Yang 2008, 27).

²⁰ For details about the cosmology of lay Dharma practitioners in Hong Kong, please refer to the dissertation ‘Popular Buddhist Ritual in Contemporary Hong Kong: Shuilu Fahui, a Buddhist Rite for

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Saving All Sentient Beings of Water and Land' by Chan Yiu Kwun (2008).

²¹ Filial piety (*xiao*, 孝) is a Confucianist moral value and practice rooted in Chinese culture; in general it refers to the obedience, respect, and support that children give to parents before and after their deaths; such children-parent relationships are often considered the foundation of Chinese kinship and society. However, filial piety is a changeable notion and practice, shaped by the socio-cultural changes of Chinese communities (Dos Santos 2006, 288).

²² These three levels of filial piety were mentioned by Dr David A. Palmer from the University of Hong Kong in an email conversation dated 2 July 2014.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The Po Lin Monastery is the sole monastery providing an ordination rite in Hong Kong. The rite is held every three years, but it was interrupted in 2011 due to the renovation of the monastery.

²⁶ Scientism is an ideology that seeks to understand and explain every phenomenon of the universe, including all religious beliefs, through science and scientific knowledge (Stenmark 2001, 3–4). Since the rule of the British government from the 1850s, Hong Kong society has been vastly influenced by Western culture, secularism, and scientism, and thus its people have become more interested in a rationalist, scientific, and philosophical approach to Buddhism (Sik 2014).

²⁷ Since the early 20th century, due to turbulent socio-political conditions, monastics from Northern and Southern China fled to Hong Kong where the British colony provided a comparatively stable living environment. 'Humanistic Buddhism' was brought to Hong Kong from the early 1910s to the mid-1950s by its founder Taixu (太虛, 1890–1947) and his disciples, such as Zhumo (竺摩, 1913–2002) and Yinshun (印順, 1906–2005). The school's impact has slowed down since the mid-1950s, after most of Taixu's disciples migrated to Taiwan and South-East Asia. Regarding the development and popularization of "Humanistic Buddhism" in Hong Kong, please refer to the detailed work of Sik Fa Ren (2014) in Chinese.

²⁸ The 'Three Periods of Mindfulness' ceremony is derived from the Pure-land sect of Chinese Buddhism, since its promotion by Zhongfeng Mingben (中峰明本, 1263–1323) of the Yuan Dynasty. The textual scripture of the ritual embraces both self-study and the death ritual. Both categories consist of seven sections that are covered by chanters in each period (Ciyi 1989, 598–9).

²⁹ Since the mid-1950s, the Tiantai School expanded rapidly in Hong Kong and has become one of the most influential Buddhist sects there, sharing leadership with the local Guangdong Buddhist lineage. The 'Three Patriarchs from the North-East' (*Dongbei Sanlao*, 東北三老) and their disciples, such as Jueguang (覺光 1919–2014), Yongxing (永惺), have contributed tremendously to the propagation of Buddhism in Hong Kong. For the development and detailed background of the Tiantai school in Hong Kong, refer to the work of Sik Fa Ren (2014) in Chinese.

³⁰ Under the revolutionary current of Mainland China in the first half of 20th century, the Tiantai

School adopted a relatively soft approach towards Buddhist institutional reform and Buddhist liturgies; however, the school still had to moderate its institutional reform and academic teaching (Sik 2014).

³¹ For details on this section, please refer to the work of Sik Fa Ren (2014) in Chinese.