

Abstract

Autobiographies and Hagiographies of Female Practitioners in Modern Thai Buddhism

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Hagiographical and autobiographical texts of male charismatic Thai Buddhists are extremely popular in current Thai Buddhism. This is evident through the ubiquity of these texts throughout the country, often given away for free at monasteries or sold in bookstores, and the obviously high costs with which some of these books have been produced. Life story texts by or about Thai female practitioners, however, are generally rare. Many of these accounts have been transmitted orally and those that have been printed often have a rather low circulation figure. In this talk, I will discuss this dearth of hagiographical and autobiographical literature and, in so doing, consider the complexities of female renunciation and gender relations in modern Thai Buddhism.