

Language and Culture in Harmony: Buddhist and Chinese Heritage Reflected in Wat Pho's Stone Figurines

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Abstract—Through analysis of the literature titled Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (CSFW), the study employed a descriptive approach, focusing on both prose and poetry. The literature consists of prose passages and a total of 30 verses (*bot*) of poetry in the Klong Dan style. The objectives of this research were to analyze the linguistic features used in the CSFW, and to investigate how Chinese culture and its values are reflected in this literature within the context of Thailand. It was found that the poetic compositions are notable through the use of rhyme, wordplay, similes and multilingual vocabulary including Pali-Sanskrit, Khmer, Chinese, and English. In particular, Chinese language elements appear in both transliterated Thai form and original Chinese script, emphasizing the cultural context. Regarding the reflection of Chinese culture, four key cultural dimensions were identified: 1) conceptual beliefs including elements of Taoism, Confucianism, and Mahayana Buddhism reflecting Chinese views on fate and spirituality 2) social organization represented through depictions of the Chinese hierarchical system including nobility and caste structures 3) cultural practices illustrated through traditional customs such as the clothing styles of nobles, monks and dancers and 4) material and symbolic culture classified into 1) tangible objects such as Chinese pagodas and sculpted figures, and 2) symbolic elements, most notably the use of the Chinese language.

Index Terms—language, reflection, culture, Chinese stone figurines, Wat Pho

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (CSFW) is widely regarded as one of the most significant literary works illustrating Chinese culture through stone figurines. It is considered the only comprehensive literary source that documents the Chinese stone figurines at Wat Pho with detailed historical context. Notably, during the reign of King Rama III in the early Rattanakosin (Bangkok) period, the king actively initiated temple restorations and construction. As a devout Buddhist monarch, he oversaw the construction of a total of 73 new temples to honor and support Buddhism (Chumphengphan, 2005). Personally, King Rama III had a profound appreciation for Chinese art and maintained strong trade relations with China through maritime routes. It is believed that his admiration for Chinese aesthetics inspired the importation of Chinese stone figurines to Thailand during his reign.

Currently, Wat Pho has more than 1,000 Chinese stone figurines, the highest number in Thailand, followed by the Temple of the Dawn (Wat Arun), which has a total of 304 such figurines. The CSFW literature was composed by a group of Thai scholars to highlight the integration of Chinese culture in Thailand, particularly as represented by the stone figurines donated by King Rama III during the restoration of Wat Pho. This descriptive literary work comprises both prose and poetry, including 30 verses (*bot*) of Klong Dan poetry, with each verse (*bat*) consisting of two lines (Paramanujitjnorasa, 2004). The text is accompanied by 358 photographs of Chinese stone figurines and each clearly depicts various aspects of Chinese culture.

Chumphengphan (2005) clearly stated that the content of the CSFW is organized into six chapters: 1) Wat Pho 2) King Rama III and the Construction of Temples with Chinese Art Objects 3) The Origin of the Chinese Stone Figurines 4) Objectives Behind the Creation of the Figurines 5) Importation of the Figurines into Thailand and 6) Types of Stone-Sculpted Figurines (p. 16).

The present study focuses on the linguistic features used in the CSFW, particularly examining forms of Thai word as borrowed from different languages such as Pali-Sanskrit, Khmer, Chinese, and English. Special attention is given to the incorporation of Chinese words—both transliterated into Thai and written in original Chinese characters to reflect Chinese cultural elements in Buddhist Thai society. These linguistic features have not yet been systematically addressed in existing research.

Furthermore, an analytical study on the reflection of Chinese culture in Thailand through these figurines, as represented in the CSFW, has not previously been conducted. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by undertaking

a linguistic and cultural analysis of the CSFW, with the aim of uncovering previously unexplored insights into the integration of Chinese cultural heritage within Buddhist Thai society.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature titled CSFW is recognized as a unique and significant textual resource in Thai historical and cultural studies, particularly in relation to Chinese cultural influence on Thai religious and architectural heritage. Composed by His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch Prince Paramanujitjinorasa during the reign of King Rama III, the work offers a comprehensive literary reflection on the Chinese stone figurines that were imported and installed in Wat Pho, one of Bangkok's most revered temples.

Historical Context and Authorship

Klong (poetry) collected in the CSFW was composed during the early Rattanakosin period when King Rama III (reigned 1824–1851) actively promoted temple restoration and construction as acts of Buddhist merit-making. A notable patron of Chinese art and trade, King Rama III facilitated the importation of numerous Chinese stone figurines aboard Chinese junks in return shipments for Thai exports. These figurines were placed as decorative and symbolic elements at temple gates and within temple precincts. The literature CSFW was thus created as a guide and a poetic interpretation of these statues.

Linguistic Forms and Literary Style

The literature Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (hereafter referred to as CSFW) presents a unique integration of Thai literary traditions and multicultural influences, particularly those derived from Chinese and Buddhist cultures. Scholars have noted that the CSFW is not only a record of artistic and historical artifacts, but also a reflection of linguistic and cultural interchanges (Chansri, 2008).

The CSFW is composed in both prose and poetry, aligning with classical Thai literary conventions. The poetic sections specifically composed in Klong meter—demonstrate literary elegance through rhyme, rhythm, and figurative language. These include the use of: Rhyming words, Playing words and Similes. According to Chittawan (2014), these techniques are essential in traditional Thai didactic poetry, often used in temples and royal inscriptions to convey both religious and moral messages.

Cultural and Scholarly Significance

Undoubtedly, the literature titled CSFW is a crucial document in the study of Sino-Thai relations, temple art, and literary aesthetics. It is often referenced in studies on Thai temple iconography, heritage preservation, and cultural diplomacy in the Rattanakosin era. Its value lies not only in its artistic beauty, but also in its role as a historical catalogue that documents the positioning and interpretation of figurines that may have deteriorated or been displaced over time.

According to the light as mentioned in the above, Baker and Phongpaichit (2009) additionally stated that cultural developments, including religious and ethnic integration, have played a critical role in shaping national identity. Particularly, the role of Buddhism and interactions with Chinese communities in Thailand were significant in the evolution of Thai society during the Rattanakosin period.

Lexical Compactness and Referential Function

The prose sections of CSFW serve a documentary and referential function, cataloguing the figures, their symbolism, and historical provenance. The lexical choices in these parts are compact, descriptive, and culturally loaded. For instance, the terms used to classify figurines reflect Chinese symbolic systems—such as references to Confucian scholars, warriors, guardians (door gods), or Taoist deities—all contextualized within Thai interpretive frameworks (Aeusrivongse, 2001).

Language as Cultural Reflection and Heritage Values

Nagavajara (1971) stated that literature not only portrays the realities of society and culture, but also reflects the moral conscience of its people (p. 20). Similarly, Nakornthup (1977) declared that literature can reflect the way of life and values of the people in a society (p. 95). Language in the CSFW is a medium for expressing cultural hybridity. It mirrors not only the artistic aesthetics of Chinese figurines, but also their interpreted meanings in Thai Buddhist temple settings. The literary language thus performs a double function—aesthetic (literary) and didactic (educational).

The above-mentioned message corresponds with Halliday's (1978) socio-semiotic model of language, wherein language is seen as both social behavior and symbolic representation (p. 14). CSFW also functions as a didactic tool for heritage education. By preserving the knowledge of the origin, symbolism, and arrangement of the stone figurines, it contributes to cultural literacy. Wat Pho was regarded as the first university of Thailand and it uses these stone figures as pedagogical devices, teaching physical health (via massage postures) and moral conduct.

Hence, the literature titled Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (CSFW) is not merely a descriptive catalogue of artifacts but a rich cultural document that reflects the intertwined legacies of Buddhism and Chinese civilization in Thailand. Through its deliberate use of language, symbolism, and historical narrative, it illustrates how religious devotion, aesthetic sensibility, and diplomatic engagement coalesced in shaping Thailand's spiritual and artistic identity during the 19th century. In particular, it demonstrates how language can simultaneously encode aesthetic, religious, and historical dimensions, thereby positioning the work as a valuable subject of study in both Thai literature and cross-cultural communication.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study, which investigates the language reflecting Chinese culture through the literature titled Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (CSFW), is a descriptive and analytical research work. The methodology employed in this study consists of the following steps:

1. Surveying and collecting documents related to the language reflecting Chinese culture as presented in the literature titled CSFW.
2. Classifying the collected documents into groups and categories, followed by analytical interpretation and explanation.
3. Composing a descriptive and analytical account based on the linguistic reflections of Chinese culture in the literature titled CSFW.
4. Presenting the research findings along with discussion and conclusion.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the research objectives stated earlier, the findings of the study can be clearly presented as follows:

A. *The Language Usage in the Literature Titled CSFW*

According to Smalley (1994) language functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a powerful symbol of group identity. The literature titled CSFW was originally composed in Thai, with an accompanying English translation, to enhance communication and facilitate readers' understanding of the significant cultural and symbolic identities represented therein. In the prose sections, Thai vocabulary is used comprehensively, showcasing a variety of word forms and structures. In the poetic sections, the language demonstrates a rich use of rhetorical devices, including rhyming, wordplay, and comparative expressions.

Notably, the literature makes extensive use of loanwords from multiple languages, particularly Pali-Sanskrit (PL-SKT), Khmer, Chinese, and English. Chinese vocabulary appears both through transliterations into Thai and in its original Chinese characters, effectively reflecting the cultural influence of China. Detailed explanations of these linguistic elements are provided below:

(a). *Rhyming Words*

Rhyming words are defined as words that end with similar sounds, such as 'cat' and 'hat' and are often used to create a melodious effect in poetry. In the CSFW literature, various types of rhyming patterns are clearly observable. The composer employs these rhymes throughout different parts of the Klong (traditional Thai poetic form) to enhance both rhythm and aesthetic value. For example:

สถิตฐานอินชัยฝ่าย	พักขวา ประดูเฮย
ชำรุดทั่วแผ่นดิน	คืนร้าง
เร่ร่อนทกทวาร	วังเรข ใหม่มฤา
รูปปั้นอันสร้างสร้าง	ใส่สนอง ๆ

(Translated): Warrior noblemen figurines are always positioned on both sides of the door—left and right. If the door becomes damaged at any point, it should be dismantled and reconstructed. Afterwards, the figurines of the noblemen should be repositioned at their original locations.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 131)

(b). *Wordplay*

Wordplay refers to the intentional manipulation of language, particularly the sounds and meanings of words for the purpose of amusement and stylistic effect. In the study of language use within the literature titled CSFW, wordplay is employed both beautifully and extensively. For example:

ลงใหญ่ลงเล็กบ้าง	บูชา พระเฮย
ทกทวารคืนคง	อับซ้ำ
ประคิณทั่วเวลา	ฤาโลก แลพ่อ
เนื่องนิศย์พระเจ้าถือ	กิจบุญฯ

(Translated): Some sacred stones are large, while others are small; all are intended for the worship of deities at all times, both day and night. Through such continuous devotion, it is believed that righteous merit will be consistently attained.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 142)

(c). *Simile Words*

A simile is a type of comparative expression used to highlight the similarities or differences between two or more elements, often using connecting words such as like or as. In the study of language usage in the literature titled CSFW, numerous similes were employed effectively. For example:

ในนอกกะลู่ศรัฟสิ้น	สองประตู ตั้งถา
นับรูปสรบันเปน	แปดผู้
กรกวมคทาอุ	อุ้งชีพ คงแส
เอกจักคอยผู้ด้าน	ต่อภัยฯ

(Translated): On both the inside and outside of the two doors, there are a total of eight figurines representing Westerners. Each figurine tightly grips a mace, as if holding onto it for dear life, suggesting a readiness to confront any potential danger.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 162)

Based on the underlined terms as identified above, it can be analytically stated that these expressions reflect the writer’s linguistic skill. The use of underlined terms in the Khlong Dan verse contributes to the poetry’s melodious quality, aesthetic beauty, and semantic depth as appeared in the literature titled CSFW.

Regarding the use of foreign languages in the literature titled CSFW, the text clearly indicates its period of composition, as discussed by Thai scholars. Various loanwords namely from Pali-Sanskrit, Khmer, Chinese, and English are found throughout different sections of the literature. Notably, the Thai language used in the literature titled CSFW is evidently influenced by these aforementioned foreign languages.

(d). *Pali-Sanskrit (PL-SKT) Loanwords*

Pimpuang (2008) stated that Pali-Sanskrit loanwords are terms borrowed from the Pali and Sanskrit languages of India (p. 2). In the study of language usage in the literature titled CSFW, Pali-Sanskrit loanwords were used extensively. For examples:

พระอรหันต์ หมายถึง ผู้สำเร็จธรรมวิเศษสูงสุดในพุทธศาสนา หรือผู้บรรลุพระนิพพานแล้ว พระอรหันต์ที่ชาวจีนรู้จักมีชื่อเสียงมากที่สุดคือ 18 อรหันต์ทองคำของนิกายมหายาน

(Translated): An *Arahant* is someone who has attained the highest level of *Dhamma* in Buddhism or someone who has reached Nirvana. To the Chinese, the most famous are the Eighteen Golden *Arahants* of the Mahayana sect.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 143)

(e). *Khmer Loanwords*

Katerote (2008) clearly stated that numerous terms in the Thai language have been borrowed from the Khmer language of Cambodia as loanwords. In the study of language usage in the literature titled CSFW, numerous Khmer loanwords were extensively incorporated throughout various sections of the text; for examples:

บ้านญ่าท่านจ่ายจ้าง	เจ๊กกระทำ จีนแส
แปรเปลี่ยนมารแบกทรง	ทรวลือเอ็ง
หินเขาชื่อสำเกา	พื้นอุล็ก รูปถา
ฉะฉะแปรรูปเพี้ยนเมือง	แบบบรรรพ์ฯ

(Translated): Chinese people were waged to build up the Chinese pagoda by pension. In each pagoda, there have been noblemen including warriors totally 8 figurines, that were sculptured at the background of stone, are carrying it verily.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 205)

(f). *English Loanwords*

In the literature titled CSFW, words borrowed from the English language were also found. Numerous English loanwords were used extensively throughout various sections of the text; for example.

ซุ้มโขนทวาร เป็นซุ้มประตูจำลองประเภทเดียวกับซุ้มประตูจีนเฉลิมพระเกียรติพระบาทสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัว เนื่องในวโรกาสครบรอบ 72 พรรษาที่วงเวียนโอเดียน สามแยกหัวถนนเขาวราช ทำเลียนแบบเครื่องไม้ขนาดธรรมดา จะมีเสาใหญ่ 4 ต้น

(Translated): An example of the archways is the Chinese archway commemorating the Sixth Cycle Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol at the Odeon roundabout at the junction on Yaowarat Road. It is made of wooden materials and is supported by four main pillars.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 226)

(g). *Chinese Loanwords*

Wasinanon (2009) stated that undoubtedly, Chinese loanwords originate from the Chinese language, which possesses a documented history spanning over 3,000 years (p. 73). In the study of language usage in the literature titled CSFW, Chinese loanwords are found embedded in various contexts throughout the text. For examples:

หมู ภาษาจีนเรียกว่า ชู ขาหมูเรียกว่า อุติ ซึ่งพ้องเสียงใกล้กับคำว่า อีหมิง ซึ่งแปลว่า มีชื่อในประกาศผลสอบ จึงถือเป็นสิริมงคล เช่น จีนบั้งอีหมิง แปลว่า มีชื่อเสียงติดป้ายทอง

(Translated): The Chinese word for a pig is “Chu.” The pig leg is called “Chu Ti” the sound of which is close to “Ti Ming” means “Having the name written on the gilded board”

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 188)

(h). *Aspect of Chinese Words in the Literature Titled CSFW*

To ensure clarity and comprehension of the detailed information and content in the literature titled CSFW, the writing style incorporates various uses of Chinese words. Notably, Chinese vocabulary appears in two primary forms: firstly, through transliteration into Thai script. For example:

รูปที่เกี่ยวกับเทพเจ้าหรือเทวดามีอิทธิฤทธิ์ ได้แก่ พระอรหันต์ **เซียน** และท้าวจตุโลกบาล ตลอดจนเรื่อง **ฮก ลก ชิว (ฝู ลู่ ชิว)** รวมทั้งเทพทั่วไปที่มีเป็นจำนวนมาก

(Translated): Figures about the god or goddesses with supernatural being feature prominently were *Arahants*, *Sian* and four guardians of the world, *Fu Lou Shou* including many gods and goddesses, which are available in the world.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 143)

Secondly, Chinese words were used in both forms of writing: transliterated into Thai alphabets, with the original Chinese characters provided in parentheses; for examples:

ระบบขุนนางของประเทจีนโบราณมีมาตั้งแต่สมัย**ราชวงศ์เซี่ย (夏朝)** การแบ่งหน้าที่เท่าที่ปรากฏในเอกสารประวัติศาสตร์ยังไม่สลับซับซ้อนมากนัก

ต่อมาในสมัย**ราชวงศ์ชาง (商朝)** การจำแนกตำแหน่งหน้าที่มีมากขึ้นและมีความสลับซับซ้อนมากกว่าเดิม

(Translated): The bureaucratic system of ancient China dates back to the Xia Dynasty (夏朝). According to historical records, the division of duties during that time was not particularly complex. Later, during the Shang Dynasty (商朝), the classification of official positions became more numerous and significantly more intricate.

(Chumphengphan, 2005, p. 102)

B. *The Reflection of Chinese Culture and Its Values in the Literature Titled CSFW*

Fundamentally, culture is a key determinant of human lifestyle. It is through culture that individuals are able to live harmoniously and engage in various occupations and social interactions. Furthermore, culture plays a vital role in the spiritual development of individuals, fostering peaceful and fulfilling coexistence. Thus, culture and society are inherently interdependent and serve as essential foundations for mutual support and sustainability.

Human beings are both the creators and the carriers of culture, while culture itself represents the symbolic expression of human civilization from antiquity to the present day. In cultural theory, the basic elements of culture can generally be classified into four major categories: Concepts, Social Associations or Organizational Structures, Customs and Practices and Instrumental and Symbolic Objects.

Soundar (2010) emphasized that Chinese culture is deeply rooted in Confucian values, ancestral traditions, and symbolic practices, which continue to influence modern Chinese society. With regard to the reflection of Chinese culture and its values as represented in Thai society, the literature titled CSFW offers rich and explicit evidence. The cultural elements observed in the text can be categorized and analyzed under the above-mentioned four domains, as follows:

(a). *The Chinese Concept*

In general, concepts refer to a society's understanding, beliefs, ideologies, and value systems. These include ideas such as faith in *Karma* meaning action and its consequences (Royal Institute, 2013, p. 16), belief in monogamy, belief in an afterlife, and faith in monotheism or polytheism. Concepts also encompass ideologies, attitudes, and judgments regarding what is considered righteous or unrighteous. These cultural frameworks vary from one society to another and are used by social groups as standards for evaluating behaviors, norms, and social conduct within their own cultural contexts.

Regarding Chinese concepts as reflected in the literature titled CSFW, a number of philosophical and religious systems are evident. Prominent among these are beliefs derived from Taoism, Confucianism, and Mahayana Buddhism. These three traditions represent the foundational spiritual and moral ideologies that have historically shaped Chinese worldviews.

For the influence of Buddhism, particularly, Mahayana Buddhism has played a crucial role in Chinese society, where Buddhist monks historically contributed not only to spiritual guidance but also to cultural, artistic, and educational development. However, the boundaries between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism often overlap. It is common for Chinese individuals and communities to follow a syncretic belief system that incorporates aspects of all three traditions, making them at times indistinguishable from one another (Yang, 2001; Knapp, 2005).

(b). *The Chinese Social Organization*

Social organization refers to a structured group of individuals who operate under a system of management, guided by formal rules and shared objectives. These can range in scale from small units, such as the family, the most fundamental social institution to large international entities, such as the United Nations. Individuals within these organizations collaborate to achieve specific goals, which may vary in importance. These goals could include maintaining the reputation of an institution, such as in alumni associations, or broader objectives such as national defense and cultural preservation.

In the literature titled CSFW, the reflection of Chinese social organization is clearly represented through the depiction of a hierarchical system that includes nobility and various social classes. Prominent within the figurines are noblemen, both military and civilian, illustrating the traditional Chinese administrative and governance structures.

Although only a limited number of imperial figures such as the emperor and his consort are depicted obviously, the presence of high-ranking generals and imperial warriors is more common and systematically arranged.

Furthermore, the figurines in CSFW portray a wide range of social classes and roles within Chinese society. These include noblemen and commoners, noblewomen and common women, monks (Phra, Bhikkhu), dancers, students, scholars, and individuals of various ages and genders—boys, girls, the young, and the elderly. This diversity offers a glimpse into the complex social structure of traditional Chinese civilization.

Interestingly, literature titled CSFW also include representations of Westerners, indicating an awareness of and interaction with foreign cultures during the early Rattanakosin period (Ministry of Culture, 1996). This artistic inclusion reflects the broader scope of cultural exchange between China and other regions beyond Asia. Although some historical debates exist—such as the controversial claim by Wood (1995) that Marco Polo may never have traveled to China. The presence of Western figures in CSFW illustrates that such cross-cultural contact was both known and artistically acknowledged.

(c). The Usage of Chinese Culture

The usage of culture refers to the customs, practices, and traditions that are widely accepted and observed within a society. Cushman (2001) also stated that cultural symbols such as the royal umbrella serve not only ceremonial purposes but also embody the historical and hierarchical values of society. These include various ceremonial rites and rituals associated with significant life events such as birth, engagement, marriage, ordination as a monk, and death. In many of these events, religion plays a prominent role, guiding the structure and meaning of the ceremonies.

Additionally, cultural usage encompasses traditional dress and food customs, both of which are often highlighted during festivals and social gatherings. These traditions may evolve over time depending on the historical and social context of each community.

In relation to Chinese cultural usage as reflected in the literature titled CSFW, several aspects are prominently depicted, especially in the forms of dress and ceremonial representation. The figurines portray detailed dressing styles of various groups within Chinese society, including imperial figures such as the emperor and empress, nobility, both male and female, commoners including men, women, boys, and girls and students, scholars, and dancers.

(d). The Instrumental and Symbolic Objects

Instrumental and symbolic objects can be categorized into two types: material and non-material culture. The former refers to tangible items, such as tools, utensils, furniture, buildings, paintings, monasteries, and Buddha image halls—objects that can be physically seen and touched. The latter refers to intangible elements, such as language, communicative symbols, numerical scales, and other abstract systems that are not physically perceptible, but carry significant cultural meaning.

As mentioned above, these instrumental and symbolic objects in the literature titled CSFW include two main categories: 1) material culture, such as spiritual structures, utensils, and furniture—e.g., Chinese pagodas, shrines, archways, lintels, dragon pillars, lantern posts, pots, vases, tables, chairs, drums, altars, and molded figurines and 2) symbolic culture, such as the Chinese language used for communication and cultural representation.

C. The Cultural Values

Based on the holistic interpretation of the CSFW, this literature reflects a wide range of values, which may be summarized in four key dimensions: 1) linguistic and lexical values, 2) socio-cultural values, 3) educational and knowledge-based values and 4) comparative and historical research values. They are as follows;

(a). Linguistic and Lexical Values

The literature titled CSFW demonstrates a rich blend of classical and modern vocabulary, incorporating loanwords from Pali-Sanskrit, Khmer, English, and especially Chinese. Each plays a significant role in conveying cultural meanings. Chinese, in particular, is crucial for expressing Chinese cultural identity within the text. The diction in the literature titled CSFW is noteworthy for its concise, vivid, and direct descriptive style, effectively communicating meaning with clarity. The use of precise language enhances reader comprehension of both the figurines' physical attributes and their symbolic significance.

(b). Socio-Cultural Values

The literature reflects historical Chinese beliefs and societal structures, particularly during the early Rattanakosin period. It provides clear evidence of King Rama III's deep admiration for Chinese art and culture, as seen in his architectural and artistic patronage. This is well-documented in historical accounts (Thandee, 2001).

(c). Educational and Knowledge-Based Values

By studying the literature titled CSFW, readers gain not only cultural insights, but also geographical knowledge concerning the specific locations of the Chinese stone figurines within Wat Pho. This enhances both literary and spatial awareness of Thai-Chinese heritage.

(d). Comparative and Historical Research Values

The literature titled CSFW also provides detailed information on Chinese classical political structures, such as the noble system, and allows for comparative studies with other Chinese literary or historical texts. It thus serves as a vital resource for interdisciplinary research in history, literature, politics, and cultural studies.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It can be confidently asserted that the literature titled Chinese Stone Figurines of Wat Pho (CSFW) serves as a significant source of knowledge regarding Chinese culture, as reflected through the presence of stone figurines in Thailand. This perspective aligns with Chansri (2008), who noted that CSFW is not merely a record of artistic and historical artifacts, but also a rich source of detailed information illustrating the knowledge on linguistic and cultural interchanges. The cultural values embedded within this literature have profoundly influenced Thai society, particularly among Chinese communities in Thailand from the past to the present.

In terms of language usage, the CSFW employs both Thai and English, with available translations in each language. Especially, Chinese and Khmer loanwords also were used in the CSFW. The prose sections utilize a range of linguistic forms, while the poetic sections—particularly those in Khlong Dan verse—feature literary devices such as similes, rhyme, and wordplay. The poetic form not only conveys meaning but also evokes aesthetic pleasure. Writing through poetry to educate or communicate with others represents both a literary technique and stylistic choice. This idea corresponds with the view given by Chittawan (2014) who stated that literary techniques are essential in traditional Thai poetry, often employed in temples and royal inscriptions to express religious and moral teachings.

The language used in CSFW serves as a medium for expressing cultural hybridity. Specifically, the literary language performs dual functions: aesthetic (literary) and didactic (educational). This view resonates with Halliday's (1978) socio-semiotic model, which identifies language as a crucial medium for communication—both a form of social behavior and a system of symbolic representation used to express content and sentiment.

Furthermore, this notion aligns with the perspective of Nagavajara (1971) who stated that literature not only portrays the realities of society but also reflects the moral conscience of its people. Literature, he argues, functions like a compass, guiding societal development and transformation in positive directions, particularly in ethics, governance, education, and economics (p. 20).

The CSFW presents a multifaceted reflection of Chinese culture in four principal domains: Belief Systems and Spirituality – including Taoism, Confucianism, and Mahayana Buddhism; Social Organization – particularly in terms of noble and caste structures; Traditions and Customs – such as the dress styles of the nobility and Instrumental and Symbolic Objects – subdivided into a) Tangible elements, such as the stone figurines themselves, and b) Intangible aspects, including linguistic elements like Chinese characters.

Thus, the CSFW is not only the document of linguistic and artistic expressions related to the Chinese figurines, but also serves as a cultural bridge, illustrating the deeply rooted Chinese heritage as integrated into Buddhist Thai society.

Moreover, the CSFW reflects a syncretic worldview wherein Thai Buddhist and Chinese folk belief systems coexist harmoniously. Figurines depicted warriors, immortals, mythological creatures, and sages symbolize core values such as strength, wisdom, protection, and virtue celebrated in both cultural and religious traditions. This idea supports Aeusrivongse's (2001) observation that the CSFW's prose elements convey a holistic socio-cultural perspective, incorporating references to Confucian scholars, warriors, guardians (Door Gods), and Taoist deities contextualized within a Thai interpretive framework.

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