

The American Missionary Views on the Siamese and Chinese Cultures and their Evangelical and Social Works in Siam between the mid-19th Century and the early 20th Century

Siu, Kam Wah
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The paper aims to analyze the views and criticisms of the American missionaries about the lives, customs, religions of the Siamese and Chinese in Siam and the Siamese politics, society and economy, and to investigate various evangelical and social works like modernized educational and medical facilities introduced and implemented by the missionaries especially the American Presbyterian mission and the American Baptist Mission from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. Based on the autobiographies and books written by the American missionaries and the mission reports published at that time, the paper attempts to illustrate the missionary views on the traditional Siamese and Chinese cultures in comparison with the American culture and particularly their criticisms of the negative aspects of these cultures including various superstitions, idolatry, inhuman religious practice and bad mores, and to demonstrate and evaluate their corresponding evangelical works and modernized social measures which had consistently been implemented for nearly a century and had significant impacts on the modernization of Siam.