

Chinese Buddhists have never remained stationary. They have always been on the move. In *Monks in Motion*, Jack Meng-Tat Chia explores why Buddhist monks migrated from China to Southeast Asia, and how they participated in transregional Buddhist networks across the South China Sea. This book tells the story of three prominent monks—Chuk Mor (1913–2002), Yen Pei (1917–1996), and Ashin Jinarakkhita (1923–2002)—and examines the connected history of Buddhist communities in China and maritime Southeast Asia in the twentieth century.

*Monks in Motion* is the first book to offer a history of what Chia terms “South China Sea Buddhism,” referring to a Buddhism that emerged from a swirl of correspondence networks, forced exiles, voluntary visits, evangelizing missions, institution-building campaigns, and the organizational efforts of countless Chinese and Chinese diasporic Buddhist monks. Drawing on multilingual research conducted in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Chia challenges the conventional categories of “Chinese Buddhism” and “Southeast Asian Buddhism” by focusing on the lesser-known—yet no less significant—Chinese Buddhist communities of maritime Southeast Asia. By crossing the artificial spatial frontier between

China and Southeast Asia,  
*Monks in Motion* breaks new ground,  
bringing Southeast Asia into the study  
of Chinese Buddhism and Chinese  
Buddhism into the study of  
Southeast Asia.



**JACK MENG-TAT CHIA**  
is Assistant Professor of History and  
Religious Studies at the National  
University of Singapore.