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PROLOGUE

It is my great pleasure to launch this being the inaugural issue, The Journal of International Buddhist Studies College, or JIBSC.

The International Buddhist Studies College (IBSC) has developed this journal in accordance with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) requirement that all M.A. and Ph.D. students submit articles for publication in journals that are accepted into the TCI (Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre) before graduation.

IBSC, which began operations in July of 2014, offers Master of Art degrees as well as Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Buddhist Studies and carries an impressive international Buddhist community. We hold that this community is the future of Buddhism and we are very proud of their success, both in education and in the teaching of the Buddha.

The aim of this journal is to be a peer-reviewed source of Buddhist knowledge not only for the university and the Kingdom of Thailand, but for the whole world. Here, IBSC students and scholars can discuss various issues regarding Buddhist Studies in the English medium and in doing so, fulfill the requirements of the HEC. This journal hopes to continue the excellence of IBSC academics in a published forum that will uphold the high standards of an MCU education.

JIBSC will be a key supporter of the "Quality Development Policy of Higher Education" of the HEC through distinction in publication by offering articles that discuss intelligent and relevant issues facing Buddhism in this modern day and age. I want to thank all contributors, not only to this issue, but future ones. It is my hope that the journal will bring high quality articles to the world, but more importantly, spread the Dhamma through scholarly excellence.



Prof. Dr. Phra Dhamvajirabundit

The Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

CONTENTS

A Study of Proper Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada Buddhism:	
A Study Based on Thai Buddhist Monks	1
Phra Rungvit Ukkhadhammo Phetkrai	
The condition of suffering and happiness with the perspective of loka-dhamma	23
Miss Notnargorn Thongputtamon	
The Roles of Buddhist Monks on Monastic Education in Mandalay, Myanmar	39
Ven. Thit Zana	
An Analytical Study of Phrakrusangworasitthichote's Educational Administration for	
Educational Equity among Highlander Youths	50
Phra Narongchai Saenmahayak	
Defining Visual Arts or Media to represent Sense of Religion Place in Tourism	66
Thirathep Chonmaitree	
An Analysis of the Roles of Sakka Devarāja (Sakka, King of Devas) in Recent Theravāda	79
Buddhist Societies in South-East Asia	
Mark Francis Hoolahan	



A Study of Proper Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada Buddhism: A Study Based on Thai Buddhist Monks

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ABSTRACT

This research article wrote with 3 objectives in mind, namely 1) To examine the problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand, 2) To examine the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada scriptures, 3) To present the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Buddhist Monks in Thailand. The finding shows various problems and impacts that aren't so difficult or complicated to solved if Thai Buddhists society pay attention and willing to co-operate. The original teaching on Saṅgha Dāna practice in the Tipitaka is found to be the offering given to group of the Ariya monks (the 4 pairs of individuals, the Stream Enterer for instance) of at least 4 members. However, with the right intention and appointing, it is merely the Dāna offering for the sake of Saṅgha even though the offeror only give to a single monk or appointed individual. The results founded have been used to present the ideal

proper Saṅgha Dāna for the contemporary Thai Buddhist society in the following categories. Proper materials for Saṅgha Dāna must be consumable and good quality. Proper monks must be ariya (noble) monks of at least 4 members, otherwise the monks should at least complete with vijjā carana sampanno (endowed with perfect clear vision and exemplary good conduct). Proper offeror should have a good virtue and characteristics. The proper occasion to offer Saṅgha Dāna is the monks are visiting, leaving, ill, goods are hard to get and still fresh and new. Proper understanding is when realized that most of the modern days Saṅgha Dāna practices are not what originally taught by the Buddha.

Keywords: Saṅgha Dāna, Theravada Buddhism, Thai Buddhist Monks.

Introduction

Looking deeply into the most popular Thai Buddhists' merit making traditions, Saṅgha Dāna is known to be among one of the most participated of them all. Those Buddhists living their life in Thailand are all well familiar with such tradition, and willing to join this particular practice with their heart set sky-high in the confidence of the field of merit that they venerated. To a Thai Buddhist, the images of those surrounding them offering Saṅgha Dāna to the monks are inscribed in the memory just like another normal practices, whether they are the families, neighbors, or friends, most of those have ever joined this merit making traditional practice of Buddhism. The collaboration, and elaboration among Thai Buddhist community in Saṅgha Dāna practice make it invulnerable, surviving, and evolving through time from the early Thai Buddhism era until present. This is of course alongside with the other practices such as keeping precepts (sīla) and meditation practice (bhāvanā), which known among the Buddhist to be the practice of virtue and good conduct.¹

Saṅgha Dāna is the offering dedicated to Buddhist monks (deep sense of this term refers to Ariya Saṅgha, or enlightened monks),² widely popular among the Thai Buddhists. This kind of offering is preferably given on the important occasion of Buddhism, such as Visākhapujā, Mākhapujā and Āsārahapujā.³ It is so popular until it becomes part of Thai culture and traditional events. However, most of the Thai Buddhists don't have the knowledge and right understanding on the historical background surrounded Saṅgha Dāna. This is because they are only carrying on doing so from generation to next generation. With most of Thai Buddhists are merely following the traditional offering of their grandparents and ancestors, without ever study the profound history of Saṅgha Dāna. This sort of traditional event without the background knowledge leads to the incorrect Buddhism belief within the Thai society. Of which, doesn't lead to any disasters or wrong doing just yet but lead to the wrong understanding of the teaching of the Buddha, within the belief of Theravada Buddhism, and

¹ See A IV 241, Puñṇakiriyavatthu Sutta [Action] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara-Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), pp. 164-166.

² Ariya Saṅgha or the group of noble monks refers to the four pairs of enlightened beings of Buddhism. These are the pair of Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmin, Anāgāmin, and Arahāt.

³ Phrakrū Kanrayānasitthivat, In-Depth Important Days of Buddhism, (Bangkok: MCU Press, 2014/2557 B.E.), pp. 15, 85, 117.

eventually cause the mismatch understanding within Thai Buddhist society. This is why the researcher had done the research, collected the info of the general problems found on Saṅgha Dāna throughout Thai Buddhist society, then attempted to present the reader with ideal proper Saṅgha Dāna.

The Problem and Impact of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand

In the present, Thailand has so much misunderstanding on how to create merit with Saṅgha Dāna, but hardly able to give detail statistically.⁴ For example, many Thai Buddhists believe that in order to offer Saṅgha Dāna they have to buy the yellow Saṅgha Dāna bucket from Saṅgha store to make this offering or some believe that they have to put all the offerings goods inside a yellow bucket to make the offering called “Saṅgha Dāna”. These are all the misunderstanding that should be comprehended otherwise might lead to the deformation of Theravada Buddhism. In this research article, we will take a look at these problems along with the concept and what the Buddhist monks in Thailand really want of Saṅgha Dāna according to the proper context of Buddhist scripture “Tipitaka” and the context of modern Thai Buddhist society. These problems include many aspect and dimensions but mainly the research will be emphasizing the perspective of the general Thai Theravada Buddhists all over Thailand. What are the common problems of Saṅgha Dāna that can be seen all over the country? What are the general concepts of Saṅgha Dāna Thai people have? What is the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Buddhist Monks in Thailand according to Tipitaka and the context of modern world condition? These are the common questions that have been asked in Thailand but the questions were never actually given a clear answer, or some of the answers we get are somehow unsatisfied for some.

So, when Thai Buddhists are talking about Saṅgha Dāna, do they think about the origin and original concept? Or they simply think about following traditional activity that has been so common for many centuries until now. Many Thai Buddhists in general don’t actually know about the original concept of Saṅgha Dāna, but instead have many different various

⁴ Sanchai Phōmmalūesī, Saṅgha Dāna, (Bangkok: Dhamma Club, 1997/2540 B.E.), pp.

understandings on this and lead to many different practices.⁵ This is one of the problems around this topic in Thailand. But the problems that present in Thailand don't just end there, there are also many problems surrounding Saṅgha Dāna. These problems include something like the quality of Saṅgha Dāna goods, commercial and business of Saṅgha Dāna, and the after effects toward the Kilesas of Buddhist monks.

Monks' Health Care Problems

The problems and impacts that will be discussed in this research article starts with the Thai Buddhist monk's health care problems. It has been a concern by monks and monastery for years now that the foods and drinks that being offer as Saṅgha Dāna can be unhealthy. Although these foods are usually received in high amount and variety, but most are just not very healthy to eat - these can be too oily, too salty, high calories and sometimes doesn't have a right nutrient proportion. Some of these can also be contaminated, this can be either from the Saṅgha Dāna packages, or contaminated right from the market or the crop fields.

Saṅgha Dāna goods Problems

The next issue that will be discussed here is the Saṅgha Dāna goods problem which in Thailand have been around for so long now ever since these goods are available to sell. The Saṅgha Dāna shops are mostly concern about their own benefit without thinking about the quality of the goods provided for the customers. The customers that buy these goods are also not concerning too much about the quality of the goods that they buy for the monks. This is because of the reason mentioned before most people simply follow their parents and ancestors on this tradition. Therefore, they tend to think about what can be done conveniently, and go ahead buying anything that is provided by the shop. All these lead to so many useless and inconsumable goods given to the monks, and these goods eventually piles up as trash inside the temple's storage room. Until there is a phrase that commonly say among some of the Buddhists that beware of this situation, that is "pseudo Saṅgha Dāna"⁶

⁵ Nāvāeak Thongyoy Sangsinchai, Right way to offer Saṅgha Dāna, (Bangkok: Dwangkaew Press, 1999 /2542 B.E.), p. 1.

⁶ Kanyārat Reunjai, CPB investigation of "Pseudo Saṅgha Dāna" found unqualified and useless goods, Innnews, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3l7DERh38Q#action=share> (accessed January 8, 2021).

which refer to the fake Saṅgha Dāna's goods that don't live up to the standard expected. The people that buy the goods don't get to use, and the people that get to use don't get to buy.

Other Saṅgha Dāna good's problem is that some temple actually sells all these goods themselves to make some money, this is Rotated Saṅgha Dāna (Sanghathānwien) which cause controversy among Thai Buddhist and lead to decline in faith. Many Thai Buddhist don't want the monks to sell those goods back to the shop and make money for themselves, which is clearly against the Vinaya that forbid the monks from receiving and using money.⁷

Misleading Concept of Saṅgha Dāna Problems

The major problem that will be discussed in this research is the misleading concept of Saṅgha Dāna. In the present Thai Buddhists don't actually get to study much of the Tipitaka. There are many reasons for this, but mostly it is because the Tipitaka itself isn't all that interesting enough especially toward those that simply follow the tradition of the previous generation. The Thai Buddhist society does not understand well the origin of Saṅgha Dāna; thus, the Thai Buddhists are pretty much following it blindly. So, it is now up to the monks and minority of the lay Buddhists to study and pass on their knowledge. This can be done by the study of the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada Buddhist scriptures, Tipitaka and its related commentary. Furthermore, the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in the Tipitaka is very old: almost 2,600 years old. The concept of such practice is probably be best to study and try to modify sensibly so that it can be apply to the modern way of monastic life of Thai Buddhist monks

⁷ Vin III 237, I. B. Horner (tr.), Vinaya Pitaka [The Book of Discipline], Vol 2, (London: PTS, 1969), pp. 99-105.

The concept of Saṅgha Dāna in the Tipitaka also appear all over the Tipitaka, but it is only in the Dakkhiṇāvibhanga Sutta (The Exposition of Offerings)⁸ that can be said to be the origin of this practice. This means this research article have to emphasize on this particular sutta for the central part of the study, but since this practice also appear in so many suttas, they also need to pay attention to as well, especially on Velāma Sutta (Velāma)⁹ where the results of merit of Saṅgha Dāna are shown. However, because the related teaching on this topic is so vast, it cannot possibly be covered all in detail.

Kilesas And Perception of the Monks Problems

Another major problems and impact Saṅgha Dāna has on Thai Buddhist society is how it is affecting Kilesas and perception of the monks. Many monks tend to get more and more greedy when they rely on Saṅgha Dāna for their requisite need. No matter how much they receive, it is never quite enough. Sometimes, when they have to share Saṅgha Dāna they even get into conflict over the better goods and start fighting each other.

Questions and Objectives of the Research

When all of these problems and impacts have been examined together with the study of the true concept of Saṅgha Dāna from the Tipitaka, it is then that the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Thai Buddhist monks can be analysed and represent. This has to be considered in the context of the problems and impacts on modern day life and the original Vinaya, then suggest the best solution that possibly solve the issues. This means the proper Saṅgha Dāna may not has to be match the original teaching, but integrate well into the modern way of life of the Thai Buddhist monks. The problem that may happen after this is the disagreement that is norm among the wise.

All these problems are considered to be the important issues to be addressed. This is because Saṅgha Dāna is among the most common way for Thai Buddhists to make merit, but somehow, don't seem to comprehended the proper way to do this. These problems needed to be pointed out, so that everyone can be more aware and help each other looking

⁸ M III 253, Dakkhiṇāvibhanga Sutta [The Exposition of Offerings] - Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trs.), Majjhima Nikāya [The middle length Discourse of the Buddha], (Oxford: PTS, 1995), p. 1102.

⁹ A IV 392, Velāma Sutta [Velāma] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), p. 262.

after and pass on the true concept and principle of this Saṅgha Dāna tradition to the next generation. This would yield a great benefit of preserving and purifying Buddhist traditional and practice for years to come.

Research Questions

1. What are the problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand?
2. What is the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada Buddhist scriptures?
3. What is the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Buddhist Monks in Thailand?

Objectives of the Research

1. To examine the problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand.
2. To examine the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada scriptures.
3. To present the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Buddhist Monks in Thailand.

Research Methodology

This research article is based on the thesis of the same title, “A Study of Proper Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada Buddhism: A Study Based on Thai Buddhist Monks”. It is a Critical Study Research which emphasized on the Document Research. The research made the investigation on various documents, and had also examines other papers as see needed while writing. This is to make sure the data collected through the examination are as reliable as possible. But if the objective involves the investigation of the Buddha teaching (Dhamma), the Theravada Buddhist literature such as Tipitaka and its commentaries would be used. However, since the researcher of this research has a very low Pali language skill, the English translation of the Tipitaka will be used, instead of the Pali-Roman version. The translated Tipitaka and its commentaries used here will mainly be “The Pali Text Society (PTS)” version, but the researcher will also use it together with the comparison with other translated version to gain a better understanding.

It has the sequence of steps as the following:

1. Collect the data from the primary and secondary resources, these include the Tipitaka, related book and articles. Do some research for the specific detail and information about Saṅgha Dāna in Thai Theravada Buddhism from all the resources available within the boundary of the Research needed for this Thesis.

2. Represent the research in the form of Analytical Description together with giving the opinions and perspective of the researcher.

3. Make the conclusion and suggestion on the proper Saṅgha Dāna for Buddhist monks in Thailand.

Findings

The proper Saṅgha Dāna about to be presented in this of the part of the article is basing on the finding of the first 2 objectives of the research. This suggested by considering the problems and the cause from the first objective as the starting point. Without a doubt the proper Saṅgha Dāna that is going to be introduced here will not be acknowledge by all Buddhists, but hopefully, it will be an appropriate solution and presentation according to the teaching in the Tipitaka and contemporary way of life in the modern Thai Buddhist society. To do this, all the problems and causes of the problems studied from the 1st objective (to examine the problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand) is used as the pillar of the presentation, and the original teaching studied from the 2nd objective (to examine the concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Theravada scriptures) is used as the pillar of the solution. But since the way of life in early Buddhism era have changed according to aniccā (impermanence)¹⁰, the modern concept of Saṅgha Dāna in the present era will also need to take into the account of the solution.

Proper Objects or Materials of Saṅgha Dāna

One of the very first thing the Saṅgha Dāna offerors have to do is to decide on what they are going to give as the Dāna to the Buddhist monks. There are many things they can give but to do it properly they must think about a few factors. These factors must be correct according to the Buddhist teaching and capable of being a solution to the particular problems found according to the research.

Proper Saṅgha Dāna for A Good Health of Thai Monks.

¹⁰ One of the Tilakkhaṇa, aniccā, dukkha and anatta.

The most common Saṅgha Dāna that has potential of harming the monks is food, and it usually offered to the monks on the regular basis almost every time Saṅgha Dāna is made. But often, it isn't so healthy due to the lack of care. Ingredients that used to cook food should avoid those that lead to illness. There are plenty of guideline and research they can rely on. For example, "Encyclopedia of Foods. A Guide to Healthy Nutrition" have suggested that you "try to be sure that your meals and snacks are rich in plant foods (fruits, vegetables, and grains), because, ounce for ounce, plant-based meals are almost always lower in fat and calories than meat-based meals. Although meat and dairy foods contain many nutrients, they also can be very high in unwanted saturated fat. The key is to avoid high-fat types of meats"¹¹ This means that the offerors should make an effort to choose the lower-fat meats, and focus on low fat products to use as the ingredient of foods to be offered to the monks. This way the monks are less likely to be fat from celebrating the faith of the offerors, and avoid the disease such as obesity.

What more, the offerors should avoid sweet and salty food. The overly sweet foods are usually high in sugar and over consumption can lead to diabetes which is a well-known illness. The guideline on diabetes management stated that the advice given is focused specifically on carbohydrate intake and sugar restriction.¹² This is one of the confirmatives that sweet ingredient such as sugar should be used with great care in cooking Saṅgha Dāna food. Too much can lead to, or worsen diabetes. As for salty food, too much salt can be a risk of high blood pressure condition, and may lead to heart and kidney disease, it is also known to

¹¹ Medical and Nutrition Experts from Mayo Clinic, *Encyclopedia of Foods. A Guide to Healthy Nutrition*, (California: Academic Press, 2002), p. 79.

¹² Gary Frost, Anne Dornhorst and Robert Moses (ed.), *Nutritional Management of Diabetes Mellitus*, (London: Wiley, 2003), p. 1.

be a cause of paralysis.¹³ Therefore, when preparing Saṅgha Dāna food the offerors should lighten on salt, sauce, fish sauce, black soy sauce, soy bean pastes and so on.

The offerors should also beware of contaminated food. There are times that Saṅgha Dāna offering come with contaminated food or drinks, either already cooked and not yet cooked. This can be the cause of food poisoning of both instantly and in the long run. If the monks get ill instantly it is usually due to germs and the diseases because the kitchen is dirty and become home to rat and cockroach, but these usually not so serious. More serious matter is the foods that contaminated with insecticide and pesticides¹⁴ such as fruits and vegetable brought from the market, and those contaminated with preservative chemicals such as package of meat, seafood, canned food like pickle bean and vegetable and so on. Other than that, is when the foods offer together with chemical that is used for washing and cleaning. This kind of food contamination happens when putting all the Saṅgha Dāna goods together in the same container for sell, when unsold for a long time the foods will be contaminated.

The Proper Saṅgha Dāna Goods to Be Offer.

The goods offering to the monks these days are varied vastly ranging from foods and drinks, tooth brush, tooth paste, shampoo, soap, washing powder, cleaner to light torch, cloths and slipper. There is a rule that business operators who bring products that may react with each other to cause color, odor or change in taste which is dangerous for monks or consumers, the warning must be indicated on the label in order to quickly separate the products from each other.¹⁵ There are many shops that sell very low quality Saṅgha Dāna goods to their customers to make more money. The “Office of The Consumer Protection

¹³ Ministry of public health, Good health start at... reduced sweetie, oily, salty food, and filled with fruits and vegetable, (Bangkok: Nutrition Promotion Group, 2017/2560 B.E.), p. 7.

¹⁴ Ministry of Public Health, how to buy and wash fruits and vegetables so they are safe and clean, (Bangkok: Agricultural Cooperative Community, 2014/2554 B.E.), p. 4.

¹⁵ Department of Religious Affairs Ministry of Culture, Happy merit creating need to pay attention to Saṅgha Dāna's label, (Bangkok: Dhamma in Trend, 2015/2558 B.E.), p. 8.

Board”¹⁶ have been trying to solve this problem for several years but until today the low quality Saṅgha Dāna still can be seen selling in the Saṅgha store. Since this is the case, the offerors need to boycott these products by not buying them and don’t recommend anyone buying them. Instead, they need to choose the offering goods themselves to make sure the goods are actually consumable.

In choosing Saṅgha Dāna products, it is a common knowledge for the wise offerors to ask themselves the 5 questions.¹⁷ 1) Is it appropriate or not? 2) Is it ok with the monk’s disciplines or not? 3) Do monks need this? 4) Is it in good quality? 5) Does it help with the propagation? Then, the offerors should avoid buying expired food and medicine. These sorts of things can be dangerous for the monks so the offerors should always check the label to make sure these are still suitable to consume.

The Proper Concept of Saṅgha Dāna Materials Base on the Tipitaka.

Within Thailand where its Buddhist society is Theravadin. The Thai Buddhists use Tipitaka as the primary source of the Buddha original teaching. This is the significant of the study of the Tipitaka. This is to help with the presentation of proper Saṅgha Dāna according to Theravada Buddhism for Thai monks. The proper concept that is about to present here is based on the suttas.

1) The honesty of the Saṅgha Dāna goods base on Dakkhināvivhaṅga Sutta.¹⁸ The offerors should think about how are they going to obtain the goods, and how righteous of the good. The proper way the goods should be obtained is from honest earning, or right livelihood

¹⁶ “Office of The Consumer Protection Board” (CPB) is the official authorities in Thailand that deals with the standard and fairness of trading in Thailand. Thai people called this organization “Sor-Kor-Bor” which is the capital letter name of the official name.

¹⁷ Pimtent99, “What is the meaning and origin of Saṅgha Dāna?”, Online Article, <https://www.shopat24.com/blog/trending/what-is-the-meaning-of-sangkathan/> (accessed January 12, 2021).

¹⁸ M III 257, Dakkhināvivhaṅga Sutta [The Exposition of Offerings] - Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trs.), Majjhima Nikāya [The middle length Discourse of the Buddha], (Oxford: PTS, 1995), p. 1106.

(samma ājiva).¹⁹ Meaning the offerors must not be stealing it from somewhere or cheat someone for the Saṅgha Dāna materials. What more? Is that the good must be righteous in term of morals and ethics of the society. Therefore, the offerors should not offer pornography, addictive drugs, weapons and so on, as the objects or material of Saṅgha Dāna.

2) The condition of the goods base on Velāma Sutta.²⁰ The Buddha taught in this sutta that the Dāna given should not be something left over or already been used (he mentioned “Give but orts” and “Give other than orts”, it is one of the four Dāna offering conditions in Velāma Sutta, otherwise the result of such Dāna won’t turn out well. This means it is better to give the food that hasn’t been eaten but freshly cooked, and it is better to give the tools that haven’t been used but still brand new. This way, it shows the great intention of the offerors and proved that the Dāna offered is truly with great faith for the sake of Saṅgha.

3) Faith and intention are the key. In the Tipitaka commentary (Atthakathā) there are some example of the offerors that give Dāna with leftover food and used cloth, but because of the great faith and intention the offerors have, the Dāna bear great fruit. The example of someone offered the leftover food can be seen from the commentary of Dhammapada, Pañcabhikkhuvatthu²¹ (The brahman who gave the gifts of first-fruits). And the example of someone that offered the used cloth is also in the commentary of Dhammapada of different volume, Cūḷekasātakavatthu²² (The Brahman with a single robe). Therefore, the intention and faith are the key toward great merit.

¹⁹ S V 8, Vibhaṅga Sutta [Analysis] - Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), Saṃyutta Nikāya [The Connected Discourses of the Buddha], vol 2, (Oxford: PTS, 2000), pp. 1528-1530.

²⁰ A IV 392, Velāma Sutta [Velāma] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), p. 262.

²¹ Dh-p-a 8, Pañcabhikkhuvatthu [XXV.6. The brahman who gave the gifts of first-fruits], Book XXV The monk Bhikkhu Vagga - Eugene Watson Burlingame (tr.), Dhammapada Commentary [Buddhist legends], Translation of Book 13-26, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1921), pp. 252-253.

²² Dh-p-a 5, Cūḷekasātakavatthu [IX.1. The Brahman with a single robe], Book IX Evil Pāpa Vagga - Eugene Watson Burlingame (tr.), Dhammapada Commentary [Buddhist legends], Translate from the original Pāli text, Translation of Book 3-12, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1921), pp. 263-264.

Proper Monks for Receiving Saṅgha Dāna

According to the Vinaya Pitaka, “Saṅgha” means a sufficient number of monks to represent the Order of monks (Saṅgha) for various ecclesiastical purposes. The Vinaya states that there are 5 kinds of Order of monks (Saṅgha), these have the members of 4, 5, 10, 20 and more than 20 monks.²³ Therefore, proper Saṅgha, must have at least 4 monks in the assembly. And according to Yajamāna Sutta (Bestow alms)²⁴ in the Saṃyutta Nikaya, what the Buddha really meant by the Saṅgha here is the four pairs of enlightened being.

However, the key element of offering Saṅgha Dāna is to offer with the right intention for the sake of Saṅgha. This had been stated by the Buddha as he said to his attendance, Ananda:

“In future times, Ananda, there will be members of the clan who are “yellow necks”, immoral, of evil character. People will give gifts to those immoral persons for the sake of the Saṅgha. Even then, I say, an offering made to the Saṅgha is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way is a gift to a person individually ever more fruitful than an offering made to the Saṅgha”²⁵

In this modern day, ariya monks are well known to be extremely rare. The chance for the offerors to encounter one is very little, needless to say about more of those. Moreover, the characteristics of the ariya monks can be impersonated, makes it difficult to distinguish between the fake ariya monk and the authentic one. The ariya monks in these present days are very unlikely to appeared, if there are some, they are probably living their life away from this disordered Thai society. The offerors should be aware of this situation and happy with what they can find. As the Buddha has said, even if the people give dāna to the immoral

²³ Vin I 319, [Five (kinds of) Orders] - I. B. Horner, M.A. (tr.), Vinaya-Pitaka [The Book of Discipline, Vol 4, (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 1971), p. 457.

²⁴ S I 233, Yajamāna Sutta [Bestow alms] - Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), Saṃyutta Nikāya [The Connected Discourses of the Buddha], vol 1, (Oxford: PTS, 2000), pp. 332-333.

²⁵ M III 255, Dakkhināvivhaṅga Sutta [The Exposition of Offerings] - Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trs.), Majjhima Nikāya [The middle length Discourse of the Buddha], (Oxford: PTS, 1995), p. 1105.

people for the sake of the Saṅgha, the result of such kamma is incalculable, immeasurable.²⁶ The researcher would highly suggest that if the offerors can find the monks with good Dhamma knowledge, and appeared to behave themselves appropriately, the offerors should be content with the chance to offer Saṅgha Dāna to such monks. They are known to be at least complete with vijjā carana sampanno (endowed with perfect clear vision and exemplary good conduct).

Therefore, it is very important to note the key success, that with the right intention in mind, offering Saṅgha Dāna to even one of the appointed monks for the sake of the entire Saṅgha, without specify any particular monk. The offeror would gain the result of Saṅgha Dāna.

Proper Saṅgha Dāna Offeror or Giver

The proper offerors' characteristics based on the Sutta are:

1) Has a good virtue. According to 4 kinds of purification of offering in Dakkhiṇāvibhaga Sutta,²⁷ the proper offeror to offer the Dāna should have the good virtue which is the primary key factor in making merit because it is this way that leads to the trusting heart in Dāna, leads to righteous of Dāna materials, lead to great faith in the fruit of Dāna. Ultimately, leads to the proper purification of any kind of Dāna.

2) Humble and respect. According to the conditions of dāna offering in Velāma Sutta,²⁸ this is the first condition of good Dāna practice. He said that one should "Give considerately, after taking thought", meaning that the offeror should give Dāna wisely with humble and respect together with other condition to get the best out of their Dāna.

3) Have faith in the law of Kamma. According to both of the suttas mentioned, Dakkhiṇāvibhaga Sutta and Velāma Sutta. Faith in kamma and its fruit in Dāna offering have been mentioned by the Buddha himself. This indicated how important it is for the offeror to have faith in the law of kamma, which is the basic level of sammā ditthi (right view) and the 1st path of the noble eightfold path.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 1105-1106.

²⁸ A IV 392, Velāma Sutta [Velāma] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), pp. 262-263.

4) Has a proper mind before, during and after offering. According to Chaḷaṅgadāna Sutta,²⁹ a proper Dāna offeror is one who his heart (mind) is glad before offering, satisfied during offering and uplifted after offering. This is what it means by the proper mind of the offeror. The offeror must maintain the moral mind (kusala citta) all the way through the 3 stages of the process of giving Dāna “before, during and after” giving. It is this way that the offerors can know for themselves in the present moment that the Dāna offered generated a great deal of merit. They can feel it through the happiness within their heart that the merit has been created, just like the Buddha said in the Metta Sutta (Amity)³⁰ that “the deed of merit is the name of happiness”.

Proper Occasion or Time to Offer Saṅgha Dāna

Based on “The timely gift (Kāladāna Sutta)”³¹, and the contemporary circumstance, this research article would suggest the proper times of Saṅgha Dāna offering as following:

1) The monks are visiting. In Thailand the monks don’t usually visit the laypeople home unless get invited. It is just a part of Thai culture that the monks and laypeople living separately and don’t interact much. When it is time for the monks to come to visit, it is a great opportunity for the householder to make a proper Saṅgha Dāna. This is also correct according to the sutta (the PTS translator uses the term “the new-comer”). This is why it is very popular among the Thai Buddhist society to invite monks to visit their home to offers foods, drinks and other requisite goods in the name of Saṅgha Dāna practice.

2) The monks are leaving. When the monks are going somewhere or maybe just going back to the monastery after the invitation. It is also a great opportunity for the laypeople to offer Saṅgha Dāna. The PTS translation of this is “one going away”. Thai people usually offer Saṅgha Dāna to the monks before they leaving the invitation so it is fair to say Thai Buddhist know this proper time well

²⁹ A III 336, Chaḷaṅgadāna Sutta [Alms] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 3, (London and Boston: PTS, 1973), pp. 236-237.

³⁰ A IV 88, Metta Sutta [Amity] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), p. 54.

³¹ A III 41, Kāladāna Sutta [The timely gift] - E. M. Hare (tr.), Anguttara Nikāya [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 3, (London and Boston: PTS, 1973), p. 33.

3) The monks are ill. This is probably the most wanted time of Saṅgha Dāna for the monks. It is alright if the temples have the medicine store to use but if not, most of the monks in Thailand are poor and sometimes don't have money to pay for the medicine. If they are very strict, don't touch or keep any money they would need it even more. The offerors should look out for this opportunity to offer the medicine and health care to these ill monks if they can to make a great merit. In the sutta, PTS translator use the term "the sick".

4) The goods are hard to get. Or the goods are in high demand hence expensive. This is also the needy time for the monks. Everyone needs to live on the requisite goods including the monks. When the goods are hard to get, it makes the goods very valuable. It takes a great deal of generosity from the offeror to spare and share their hard earn goods. If the offeror can let go of their stinginess and offer goods as Saṅgha Dāna at this time, it will yield great fruit.

5) The goods are fresh and new. Or the top-quality goods. One of the best times to offer. The offeror should offer the best condition they can offer to the monks and when the goods are still new, foods are still fresh, they are definitely at their best condition. According to the sutta, it says "the first-fruits of field and orchard", this simile means the top-quality goods one may have. Therefore, the offeror should not wait long or hesitate to offer their goods to the monks, to get the best fruit of their own kamma.³²

Proper Understanding Toward Saṅgha Dāna Practice

There are a lot of misleading concept of Saṅgha Dāna in Thai Buddhist society, and this include the bad perception toward Saṅgha Dāna. This research article is going to go over a few points as following:

Proper Concept on the Saṅgha Dāna Ceremonies and Ritual

Thai Buddhists almost always conduct ceremony on Saṅgha Dāna that tend to come with a set of specific ritual, such as lighting the candles and incenses, or organize ceremony³³ similar to those in Brahm-Hindu. Passed on for so many generations until it is now part of Thai Buddhist tradition. However, there is no such principle and practice on these rituals can be

³² These 5 occasions listed is the adaptation of contemporary Saṅgha Dāna practice together with the Kāladāna sutta.

³³ Boonmee Tankaew, Tradition and ceremony of Buddhism, (Bangkok: Audience store, 2004/2547 B.E.), pp. 111-112.

found within the Tipitaka. Therefore, there is no such thing as the proper Saṅgha Dāna ceremony and ritual according to the Tipitaka. However, the ceremony and ritual are still needed as part of maintaining the religion. This is because it is one of the elements that make up a religion³⁴ and consider as one of the strategies needed for uniting its followers. The details of the common ritual use in the Saṅgha Dāna ceremony can be found in various books, such as “Tradition and ceremony of Buddhism” by Boonmee Tankaew, this article is not going to cover it any further here.

Proper Attitude of Monks Toward Saṅgha Dāna

The impact of Saṅgha Dāna problems is also happening among the group of the monks themselves. The primary cause of this impact is their own kilesa, but there is also the secondary cause which involve Saṅgha Dāna offeror too. Here is what this article would like to suggest:

1) Money and Saṅgha Dāna. The monks receiving or keeping money is obviously against the Vinaya,³⁵ but due to the need of using money of the contemporary monks to cover the cost of various necessary things, this research cannot advice the laypeople to stop giving money to the monks or to the temple, unless there are someone there to provide for everything that are vital to their requisite need. However, wise offeror should choose to offer the money to the monks or the temple that are actually needing it, moderately, so they the monks would not over spend on the unnecessary things. What is more important is the monks themselves because this problem is originated from the monks kilesa, greed (lobha).

2) Conflict over Saṅgha Dāna goods. This problem is less likely to be seen because Thai offerors are usually generous enough to offer more than the monks need, but it can still happen. This is also due to the monks kilesa but this one has more to do with anger (dosa) than the other two (lobha and moha). The solution to this is simply doing the same as the

³⁴ Academic Division of Dhammakaya Open University, The Fundamental of Different Religions DF 404, (California: Dhammakaya Open University, 2007/2550 B.E.), p. 8.

³⁵ Vin III 237, [Forfeiture (Nissaggiya) XVIII] - I. B. Horner, M.A. (tr.), Vinaya Pitaka [The Book of Discipline], Vol 2, (London: PTS, 1969), pp. 99-105.

problem with the money, but the problem can actually be prevented if the temple or the abbot can manage and share the result well and fair. If the conflict happened to the group of monks over Saṅgha Dāna however, the monks should consider disrobe.

3) Proper monk's perception on Saṅgha Dāna. Many monks in the present days look at Saṅgha Dāna as the opportunity to receive worship and fortune. These monks have been blind because kilesa cover up their mind, and unable to see the reality according to the truth that manifested by the Buddha. Their perception toward Saṅgha Dāna should be only to aid the need of creating the good kamma or merit of the offerors and nothing else. The monks should look at all the goods received as the danger that might harm their pure life and handle it with care. The sutta called "The fire (Aggikkhandhopama Sutta)" ³⁶ tell the word of the Buddha himself to warn the monks not to enjoy pleasures, homage and Dāna of the laypeople. Otherwise, hell might be their destiny after death.

Proper Understanding on Rotated Saṅgha Dāna

One of the wrongly Saṅgha Dāna practice is the "rotated Saṅgha Dāna". This practice is fairly new and just appears in Thailand for a past 1-2 decade but it is unclear how long has it been around or where does it originated. This problem has the impact directly toward the faith and confidence laypeople have with the Saṅgha and the triple gems as a whole. The one should be responsible for this is the monks and the sellers that are involve and enjoy doing this for their own sake. Although the offeror would still be getting the merit and its fruit from this practice, it should not be encouraged or support by the wise Buddhists.

Conclusion

The problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna in Thailand are significant for the survival of the authentic practice and faith that the next Buddhist generations may have. These are starting from minor problem such as monk's health, to more serious problems, such as cheating of Saṅgha Dāna store in the Saṅgha Dāna's goods problem. More to this are problems with misleading concepts and principle problem which are very common nowadays. And finally, the negative impacts on Thai Buddhist society have been known as a new normal. Especially the impact on the perception and practice of Thai Buddhist monks that cause the decline in faith of laypeople as a whole picture. Through a Critical Study Research which

³⁶ A IV 128, Aggikkhandhopama Sutta [The fire] - E. M. Hare (tr.), *Anguttara Nikāya* [The Book of the Gradual Sayings], vol 4, (London Henley and Boston: PTS, 1978), pp. 84-90.

emphasized on the Document Research, a better understanding of the various problems and impacts of Saṅgha Dāna have been brought to light. The finding of this research has been used to present a proper Saṅgha Dāna which is appropriate for the contemporary context.

The proper Saṅgha Dāna objects such as foods and various Saṅgha Dāna goods is presented in a very simple way, but yet very logical. The offerors should be more aware of the monk's health care problems and offer only healthy foods, various food guideline can be used to provide a good idea of they should offer. When buying something to offer the monks, the offerors should avoid buying a yellow bucket that contain too many useless goods. But they should choose what to offer themselves to ensure the maximum consumable. At a time of offer Saṅgha Dāna they don't need to find the complete group of the noble (ariya) monks, but their intention must set to offer it for the sake of the entire Saṅgha. Other proper Saṅgha Dāna suggestion in this research article can also be studies by reading thorough it if the offerors need a further details.

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The condition of suffering and happiness with the perspective of loka-dhamma

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to study the condition of suffering and happiness with the perspective of Loka-dhamma. According to the study, it was found that the condition of suffering and happiness is the feeling. They consist of nature in human life. Loka-dhamma is a natural law. Humans must meet up within the course of a lifetime. Stupid people trying to engage with it and never get away. The Buddha saw that the people who are developing liberating insight can get free from this chain of life. Thus, the perspective of Loka-dhamma can make themselves up to know the right way. This concept dealing with seeing the truth. In addition, with the perspective of loka-dhamma, those who get a touch of this knowledge would do well in releasing themselves from physical and mental suffering, and practice of perfection in Kamma, well-meaning of human beings.

Keywords: suffering, happiness, loka-dhamma.

Introduction

(sabbe sattā sukha-kāmā dukkha-paṭikkulā).

“All living beings”, says the Buddha, “desire happiness and recoil from suffering”.

The teaching of Buddhism centers primarily on human existence consisting of life, suffering, death and the way out of it.

The Buddhist perspective on life, suffering and death can never be truly understood apart from the Buddhist laws of causality (Paticcasamuppada) and mutation. For the Buddhist these two laws are natural laws that operate universally in all physical and mental phenomena. The law of cause and effect is thus expressed: “when this exists, that exists, when this arises, that arises, when this is not, that is not, when this ceases, that ceases.”¹ This is interpreted as meaning that all that exists is the result of antecedent causes. Each ‘event’ or ‘happening’ acts as the cause or the necessary condition for the arising of the following event, which then provokes or causes another event. Thus, as used in Buddhism, the relation between cause and effect is only that of the earlier to the later phase of a single process.²

Buddhism accepts the fact that, like happiness, suffering is subject to change. But at the same time Buddhism points out that there is no balance of happiness and suffering. The painful side of experience usually outweighs happiness. However pessimistic it may seem, Buddhism tries to address the reality of suffering, without any pretense or deception, so as to focus on this painful side of life. At the same time it tries to probe beneath the fact of suffering in search of its causes and a way to end.³

Therefore, The Lord Buddha present the way out of suffering by give to understand dharma of life, this article expresses the way to understand the truth is important and understand what it is, and how is important to know them

¹ Y. Karunadasa, (2013), *Pursuit of Happiness: the Buddhist Way*, Retrieved from <https://www.buddhism.hku.hk/documents/lecture2.pdf>

² Pinit Ratanakul, (2004), *The Buddhist Concept of Life, Suffering and Death, and Related Bioethical Issues*, In Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics, 14 (141-146.), Retrieved from <http://www.eubios.info/EJ144/ej144f.htm>

³ Idem.

The condition of suffering

Suffering: There are many ways of understanding the Pāli word 'Dukkha'. It has generally been translated as 'suffering' or 'unsatisfactoriness', but this term as used in the Four Noble Truths has a deeper and wider meaning. Dukkha contains not only the ordinary meaning of suffering, but also includes deeper ideas such as imperfection, pain, impermanence, disharmony, discomfort, irritation, or awareness of incompleteness and insufficiency. By all means, Dukkha includes physical and mental suffering: birth, decay, disease, death, to be united with the unpleasant, to be separated from the pleasant, and not to get what one desires. However, many people do not realize that even during the moments of joy and happiness, there is dukkha because these moments are all impermanent states and will pass away when conditions change.⁴

Yogavacara Rahula said all problems in life boil down to psychological problem called dukkha or suffering. Suffering is not just poverty, starvation and sickness but it is related to mental suffering in the form of confusion, anxiety, worry, restlessness. Buddha point out that they are caused by our mental attitude and reactions to circumstances. Not by the objects or situations themselves. If we really check up inside our mind we will find this is true.

This suffering is understood in Buddhism to be the clash between ourselves and the world around us. To put it in other words, it is the clash between our desire and reality. The real cause of our suffering is the unrealistic desire, not the reality that frustrates it.⁵

Therefore, the truth of Dukkha encompasses the whole of existence, in our happiness and sorrow, in every aspect of our lives. As long as we live, we are very profoundly subjected to this truth.⁶

The condition of happiness

⁴ Sri Dhammananda Maha Thera, (n.d.), **The Buddhist Way of Life for Householders** (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/74.htm>

⁵ Yogavacara Rahula, (2008), **The way to Peace and Happiness**. Taiwan: the corporate body of the Buddha Education foundation.

⁶ K. Sri Dhammananda Maha Thera, (n.d.), **Four Noble Truths** (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/74.htm>

Happiness

In addition, even though Dukkha is a noble truth, it does not mean that there is no happiness, enjoyment and pleasure in life. There is, and the Buddha has taught various methods with which we can gain more happiness in our daily life. However, in the final analysis, the fact remains that the pleasure or happiness which we experience in life is impermanent. We may enjoy a happy situation, or the good company of someone we love, or we enjoy youth and health. Sooner or later, when these states change we experience suffering. Therefore, while there is every reason to feel glad when one experiences happiness, one should not cling to these happy states or be side-tracked and forget about working one's way to complete Liberation.⁷

According to Richard he said happiness really is. His emphasis the different pleasure and happiness. The former offer is often what we spend a lot of effort trying to obtain, thinking that it his happiness we are chasing.⁸

In the Pāṭi-English Dictionary, Rhys Davids gives the definition about the term 'Sukha or Happiness' pleasant, blest and sukha means well-being, happiness each ideal and success. Moreover, the synonyms of the term happiness are blessedness, blessing, cheer, cheerfulness, delight enjoyment exaltation, gladness, joy, merriment, pleasure, rapture, sense of well-being and transport. Happiness is dividing into two kinds. There are physical happiness (Kāyika-sukkhā) and mental happiness (Cetasika-sukkhā).

Firstly, Kāyika-sukkhā or physical happiness means happy people have better health. They get the things what they want. It is the material happiness which depends on other person or things as the arising basis of happiness or joy.

Secondly, Cetasika-sukkhā or mental happiness means the state of mind which is meditative, clam and joyful etc.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Micael Widell, (2016), Matthieu Ricard on Buddhism and Happiness (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://michaelwidell.com/happiness-by-matthieu-ricard/>

However, both happiness depend on each other. That means when one has a good mental condition and their cause a good physical condition too.

As human being we have many moments of these sense pleasures and although they are transitory, still they create a kind of joy and happiness in it. It is the happiness inside. Example when person makes the meditation then he get peace in mind.

Buddha presents the great happiness. This is the happiness and bliss of concentration. That is a higher kind of happiness than the happiness of heaven.⁹ This is the Vipassana happiness or happiness of insight. The mind which is seeing clearly, penetrating deeply into the nature of things, experience the arising and passing away of phenomena very distinctly.

Therefore, the study of happiness for understanding the great beauty of the dhamma by the understanding of how things are happening.

The condition of suffering and happiness with the worldly condition perspective:

The Lokadhamma Sutta: “*Aṭṭhime, bhikkhave, lokadhammā lokam anuparivattanti, loko ca aṭṭha lokadhamme anuparivatta’ti....loko ca ime aṭṭha lokadhamme anuparivattati.*”¹⁰

“Bhikkhus, the eight manifestations of worldly vicissitudes are always following all living beings, otherwise known as “the world,” and all beings are also following worldly vicissitudes.”¹¹

There are eight manifestations of worldly vicissitudes, and these are always following living beings. If a man is in the sun, his shadow always follows him — he cannot prevent it from following him. So, like the shadow, these worldly vicissitudes always follow all beings. Similarly, beings are always pursuing worldly vicissitudes.

⁹ Phramaha Prapas Kaewketpong, (2011), Study of the Theravada Buddhism concept of Human Destiny, (Ph.d Thesis), Banaras Hindu University, Faculty of Art, Philosophy and Religion.

¹⁰ Bhikkhu Pesala, (2018), Mahāsi Sayādaw A Discourse on Worldly Vicissitudes (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <http://www.aimwell.org/lokadhamma.html#WhatIsLokadhamma>

¹¹ Idem.

Everybody has had their ups and downs of life. In the circumstances, it is important to maintain their integrity and to remain calm and smooth. More or less, people surely must face with this nature of eight manifestations of Worldly Vicissitudes (Loka-dhamma). But it is not easy for a layman to become tolerant of Lokadhamma.¹²

In the Mangala Sutta, the Buddha said:

“Phutthassa lokadhammehi cittam yassa na kampati.”¹³

The term ‘Lokadham’ (in Burmese) is derived from the Pāḷi term ‘Lokadhamma’. ‘Loka’ is of three kinds: Sattaloka, Saṅkhāraloka, and Okāsaloka. Sattaloka means all living beings. Each being is one world. That is, each person or being is a world.¹⁴

Okāsaloka means the abodes, places of residence, or habitats of beings. So we have the human world, the world of devas, the world of Brahmas, the lower realms of misery: hell, the animal kingdom, the abode of hungry ghosts (peta). The abode of animals and hungry ghosts are on the earth; the abode of devas and brahmas are celestial realms.

Saṅkhāraloka means the continuous activities of the physical and mental elements of beings, and the changes and movements of inanimate things such as the earth, trees, forests, mountains, abodes, water, air, fire, etc. In brief, it includes all evolutionary processes of mental and physical phenomena.

¹² Lokadhamma, (2014), The Unbeguiled One (8 Loka-dhamma) (A life that does not err) (Online).

Retrieved 24 December 2020, from

http://www.thaniyo.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241:thaniya5747&catid=9:thaniyapucha2557&Itemid=13

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Pesala, (2018), Mahāsi Sayādaw A Discourse on Worldly Vicissitudes (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <http://www.aimwell.org/lokadhamma.html#WhatIsLokadhamma>

From the above, we will concentrate in the world of sentient beings (sattava). So ‘the world’ in this context means ‘living beings’ and Dhamma means ‘the natural law’. Loka-dhamma means the natural consequences that every being has to experience and contend with. The Buddha gave two discourses¹⁵ on Lokadhamma: a short one and a longer one.¹⁵

Lokadhamma shows the natural consequences that every being has to receive and contend with. It relates to the loka of sentient beings (Sattava). Therefore, Loka means ‘being’ and Dhamma means the ‘law’. The Buddha had delivered Lokadhamma in his suttas. Like a shadow, human beings are always accompanying Lokadhamma. No one can dispel it.¹⁶

Loka-dhamma: ‘worldly conditions’: ‘Eight things are called worldly conditions, since they arise in connection with worldly life.

They are comprised follow:

1. Lābha or gain - having an abundance of food, money, assets.
2. Alābha or loss – not having an abundance of food, money, asserts.
3. Yasa or fame or rank, dignity – having companions.
4. Ayasa or obscurity – not having companions.
5. Nindā or blame – getting blames and censures.
6. Pasaṃsā or praise – or getting praises.
7. Sukha or happiness – good heath in body and happiness in mind.
8. Dukkha or pain suffering in body.¹⁷

Thus there are eight articles of loka-dhamma, four desirable ones and four undesirable. When one gets the desirable items, one is glad, interested and high spirit. But when one meets with the undesirable items, one is sad and depressed, looking painful. Both types of emotion are natural responses to the impact of loka-dhamma. The one keen to be happy is also very easy to be sad. The one of great happiness can be easily tuned into of great sorrow. Sadness is domanassa.¹⁸

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

¹⁷ U. Nyi, (2010), *Practical Aspects of Buddhist Ideals*, (U.K.: n.p.), p.40.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

The Worldly Vicissitudes are composed of eight in number. The following eight laws are grouped in pairs:

Sweet (good)	Bitter (Bad)
1. Gain	2. Loss
3. Repute	4. Disrepute
5. Praise	6. Blame
7. Happiness	8. Suffering ¹⁹

Therefore, in order to gain normal position of his consciousness in the upside-down life, everybody must stand firm according to the appropriation of Dhamma.²⁰

Lābha and Alābha: one must work hard in all fairness to earn worthy of one's effort. But do not too shown so as to make others hate the sight of you.

Yasa and ayasa: benefactor gentlemen and womenfolk look only if surrounded by some companions. The companions take care of security inside and outside of the courtyard and also assist in every other need.

Nindā and pasamsā: The Buddha says: "They who speak much are blamed. They who speak a little are blamed. They who are silent are also blamed. In this world there is none who is not blamed."

Blame seems to be a universal legacy to mankind. The majority of the people in the world, remarks the Buddha, are ill-disciplined. Like an elephant in the battle-field that endures all arrows shot at him, even so, the Buddha says, do I suffer all insults.²¹

(sukha) and (dukkha) are the last pair of opposites. They are the most powerful factors that affect mankind. Ordinary happiness is the gratification of a desire. No sooner is the desired thing gained than we desire some other kind of happiness. So insatiate are our selfish

¹⁹ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

²⁰ Buddhist Study, (2015), Loka Dhamma 8 (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=301415336686509&story_fbid=395490143945694

²¹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

desires. The enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness to an average person.

The second source of happiness is derived by the enjoyment of such possessions (*bhoga sukha*). Ordinary men and women wish to enjoy themselves. The Buddha does not advise all to renounce their worldly pleasures and retire to solitude.

The enjoyment of wealth lies not only in using it for ourselves but also in giving it for the welfare of others. What we eat is only temporary. What we preserve we leave and go. What we give we take with us. We are remembered for ever by the good deeds we have done with our worldly possessions.

Not falling into debt (*ananasukha*) is another source of happiness. If we are contented with what we have and if we are economical, we need not be in debt to anyone. Debtors live in mental agony and are under obligation to their creditors. Though poor, when debt free, you feel relieved and are mentally happy.

Leading a blameless life (*anavajjasukha*) is one of the best sources of happiness for a layman. A blameless person is a blessing to himself and to others. He is admired by all and feels happier, being affected by the peaceful vibrations of others. It should be stated however that it is very, very difficult to get a good name from all. The noble-minded persons are concerned only with a blameless life and are indifferent to external approbation. The majority in this world delight themselves in enjoying pleasures while some others seek delight in renouncing them. Non-attachment or the transcending of material pleasures is happiness to the spiritual. Nibbānic bliss, which is bliss of relief from suffering, is the highest form of happiness.

Ordinary happiness we welcome, but not its opposite -- pain, which is rather difficult to endure.²²

²² Idem.

Therefore, all human in the world must face with this reality.

“All saṅkhāras (conditioned things) are impermanent” sabbe dhammā anattā — “all dharmas (conditioned or unconditioned things) are not self” sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā — “all saṅkhāras are unsatisfactory”²³

In Buddhism, the three marks of existence are three characteristics (Pali: tilakkhaṇa; Sanskrit: trilakṣaṇa) of all existence and beings, namely impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā). These three characteristics are mentioned in verses 277, 278 and 279 of the Dhammapada.

That human is subject to delusion about the three marks, that this delusion results in suffering, and that removal of that delusion results in the end of suffering, is a central theme in the Buddhist Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.

As mentioned earlier, lacking a permanent Ego at the center of our being and transitory in our nature, we long to find and to cling to something substantial in the ceaseless flow of change. We therefore project reality onto an illusory Ego for the purpose of gratification. Possession is used as a means of ego-gratification to fill this void. The use of people as objects to be manipulated for our needs is another way in which we attempt to solidify ourselves. But it is like building a house on sand. There is nothing substantial there. The grains fall apart and dissolve, and the house crumbles into dust. We still feel inadequate or unsatisfied, no matter what we get, because our ego-desires (tanha) are by nature insatiable.

It is seen in Buddhism that much of the misery of life is caused by self-centeredness and the constant desire to satisfy one's own needs. These ego-desires are the very root of all evil, including greed, lust, hatred, lying, deceit, and crime. It is the delusion of the Ego that begets all forms of these ego-desires. Because ego-desires are the cause of most human suffering, it is the elimination of the Ego that is necessary to end our unhappiness. And because the Ego has no reality of its own we are able to abolish it through our efforts.

This is not seen as an easy process. Buddhism discourages ego-focus because it wants us to realize our non-personal potentialities. Besides, self-concentration does not allow the pursuit of truth and righteousness. The value of life does not depend on quantity but on

²³ Three marks of existence. (2021, May 03). Retrieved May 12, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence

quality. Any life lived solely for the self is a life not worth living, as there is no room for the highest goal of attaining nibbana, the liberation from the endless life-cycle, samsara existence. It is this ultimate goal that makes life worth living. Thus, to be absorbed and engrossed in the temporal, impermanent part of life matters little.²⁴

As Professor Rhys Davids remarked, the state of an individual, of a thing or person, distinct from its surroundings, bounded off from them, is unstable, temporary, sure to pass away. It may last as, for instance, in the case of the gods for hundreds of thousands of years; or, as in the case of some insects, for some hours only; or as in the case of some material things (as we should say some chemical compounds), for a few seconds only. But in every case as soon as there is a beginning, there begins also at that moment to be an ending. The ethical significance of this law of impermanence is well brought out in the MahāSudassana Suttanta (DN 17). There the Buddha tells Ānanda, his favorite disciple, about the glories of the famous king of the past, Mahā Sudassana; about his cities, treasures, palaces, elephants, horses, carriages, women, and so on, in the possession of which he led a wonderful life; about his great regal achievements; and finally his death; only to draw the moral conclusion: “Behold, Ānanda, how all these things are now dead and gone, have passed and vanished away. Thus, impermanent, Ānanda, are the saṅkhāras; thus untrustworthy, Ānanda, are the saṅkhāras. And this, Ānanda, is enough to be weary of, to be disgusted with and be completely free of such saṅkhāras.” When the Buddha characterized all compounded things and conditioned processes as impermanent and unstable, it must be understood that, before all else, stood out that particular heap of processes that is called man; for at bottom it was with man chiefly that Buddha had to do, in so far as it was to man primarily that he showed the way to emancipation. Thus the chief problem was to find out the real nature of man, and it is precisely in this great discovery that the uniqueness of the Dhamma is visible. The Buddha’s conclusion regarding man’s nature is in perfect agreement with his general concept of impermanence: Man himself is a compound of several factors and his supposedly persistent

²⁴ Pinit Ratanakul, (2004), The Buddhist Concept of Life, Suffering and Death, and Related Bioethical Issues, In *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 14 (141-146.), Retrieved from <http://www.eubios.info/EJ144/ej144f.htm>

personality is in truth nothing more than a collection of ceaselessly changing processes; in fact, a continuous becoming or bhava.²⁵

These eight worldly conditions are divided into two sides, those that are pleasant, desirable and generally aspired to, known as ittharammana, and those that are distressing, undesirable, and generally abhorred, known as anittharammana. Regardless of whether they are liked or not, these eight worldly conditions can arise for everyone, be they unlearned and unenlightened or learned and enlightened, the only difference lying in the way each person responds to and acts on them. That is to say:

1. Unlearned, unenlightened beings do not know or understand the true nature of worldly conditions and so they mindlessly rejoice and lament over them: whenever they win they become indulgent and vainglorious, and whenever they lose they become sad and despondent, or even deranged. They let worldly conditions control their lives and overwhelm their minds, so that they are forever experiencing ups and downs and do not transcend sorrow.

2. Learned noble disciples know how to reflect on worldly conditions and see their true nature: that all things that arise, whatever they may be, are without exception unstable, impermanent, imperfect and naturally subject to change. Thus they do not mindlessly indulge in pleasant experiences (ittharammana) or become saddened or depressed on account of unpleasant experiences (anittharammana); they abide with mindfulness and equilibrium, neither indulging in happiness nor being overwhelmed by suffering.²⁶

The Conclusion:

All conditioned things end in dukkha and only the deathless (that which is neither born nor dies) bring perfect, permanent peace. There fore it would be pointless for the arahant to become involved in worldly concerns which contribute to the conditioned experience of dukkha. The Buddha advised the early monks to beware of the ‘eight worldly conditions’ (loka-dhamma) so arahant, as one who has ‘reached the end of the world’, completely

²⁵ O. H. de A. Wijesekera, (n.d), The three Signata: Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā (With extracts from the Buddha’s discourses), Retrieved from <https://what-buddha-said.net/library/Wheels/wh020.pdf>

²⁶ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

comprehends the world's dangers and is incapable of living with any worldly attachment remaining:

Hence the wise one who knows the world. The one who has lived the holy life. Will reach the end of the world. Knowing the world's end, at peace. He no more longs for the world. Nor for any other. (AN 4:45).²⁷

The Arahāt's mind remains unshaken. In other words, he is unaffected by gain and loss, praise and blame, fame and defame, happiness and sorrow, when affected by pair of worldly vicissitudes. He remains calm and stable in mind, because there are no defilements (kilesa) at all. There are no dangers for him. So, the arahats are also subjected to Lokadhamma though they can receive both ones of the good and the bad with equanimity (uppekkha).²⁸

As fruits fall from a tree -- tender, ripe or old -- even so we die in our infancy, in the prime of manhood or even in old age. The sun rises in the East only to set in the West. Flowers bloom in the morning to fade in the evening. Inevitable death, which comes to all without exception, we have to face with perfect equanimity. "Just as the earth whatever is thrown Upon her, whether sweet or foul, Indifferent is to all alike, no hatred shows, nor amity, so likewise he in good or ill, must even-balanced ever be." ²⁹

A person who is not heedless or so enraptured by life and the world that he is enslaved by them- 'deceived by the world, drunk on life,' as it were- is one who is mindful, who knows how to look and investigate, and knows the right attitude to adopt to the truths that exist inherently in life and this world as the natural course of things, as follows: Knowing the ways of the world: he reflects on, understands and establishes mindfulness properly in relation to the ever-changing conditions in life within the world known as the eight loka-dhamma (norms of the world, or normal conditions which repeatedly visit worldly beings, and by which worldly beings are constantly being spun around).³⁰ which the follow the says:

²⁷ Dennis Candy, (2008), *Peace in the Buddha's Discourses: A Compilation and Discussion*, Kandy: Buddhist publication Society. p. 105.

²⁸ Lokadhamma, op.eit.

²⁹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

³⁰ Lokadhamma. (2014). **The Unbeguiled One (8 Loka-dhamma) (A life that does not err)** (Online). Retrieved 24 December 2018, from

“When touched by worldly conditions the mind of an Arahant never wavers. Amidst gain and loss, fame and defame, praise and blame, happiness and pain, let us try to maintain a balanced mind”.³¹

“Loka-dhamma is nature’s course, various in kind and source, Emotion not to rise, cultivate the mind to be wise”.³²

http://www.thaniyo.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241:thaniya5747&catid=9:thaniyapucha2557&Itemid=13

³¹ Nārada Mahāthera, (2002), Eight worldly conditions (Online), Retrieved 24 December 2020, from <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach43.htm>

³² U. Nyi, op.cit, p. 44.

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The Roles of Buddhist Monks on Monastic Education in Mandalay, Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

Buddhism an education leads learners gain a proper knowledge to understand the reality of life. Buddhist education has focus on the three sources of education; 1) associate with good teacher or good friend, 2) listening or learning, 3) wise attention or thinking and practicing or training. Educational systems are dependent on the system of knowledge. This knowledge cannot operate without wisdom. And then, wisdom becomes the principal goal of the education system. The goal of Buddhist education is to attain “wisdom” (paññā). The Buddhist monks have many roles in Theravāda Buddhism and Mandalay, Myanmar society. The roles of Buddhist monk on education are associated with two kinds of duties (dhūra) which are grandadhura (teaching and learning to Tipiṭaka) and vipassanādhura (practicing and training to threefold training).

Keywords: Roles of Buddhist monks; Monastic education; Mandalay.

Introduction

Buddhist education is more exceptional than other formal education systems because it is not only about knowledge but also Buddhist education emphasizes training people with their behavior covering physical, verbal and mental acts. Buddhist education is the most significant approach which makes a perfect person develop and be a responsible adult in society. The primary aim of Buddhist education is the development of the individual and the development of society.¹ The significance of Buddhist education can be seen after students graduate where it reflects in students' attitudes through behavior.

Buddhist education leads learners to gain proper knowledge to understand the reality of life. Education in the early Buddhist age was not dependent upon written literature. But, it was depended on memorize of the Buddha's teaching. The goal of Buddhist education is to attain "wisdom" (paññā).² The education in Buddhism is wide open and available to the people of life. Buddhist education must focus both in moral and mental, knowledge and wisdom, theory and practice accordingly.³ The main stress is given to have clear idea of Tipiṭaka. The word Tipiṭaka is the name given to the Buddhist sacred scriptures which means "three baskets".⁴ It consists of Sutta- the conventional teaching, and Vinaya- the disciplinary code, and Abhidhamma-the ultimate teaching.⁵

¹ Ratanasara. Havanpola, *Buddhist Philosophy of Education*, (Kelaniya: Vidyalaṅka University, 1995), p. 17.

² Chin Kung. Master, *Buddhism as an Education*, (Singapore: Buddhadharma Education Association Inc, 1999), p. 4.

³ Nguyen Quy Hoang, *The Journal of International Buddhist Studies College (JIBSC)*, vol 1, "Higher Buddhist Education in Vietnam: Challenges and Solutions", (Ayutthaya, Thailand: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2015), p. 56.

⁴ Narada, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, (Kula Lumpur: Publication of the Buddhist Missionary society, 1977), p. 272.

⁵ Sri Dhammananda. K. (ed.), *What Buddhists Believe*, (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1993), p. 63.

The Meaning of Education

The word education is derived from the Pāli word “sikkhati” which means to learn, to train oneself, to practice i.e. “sikkhā” which means to study; “sikkhana” means learning, training.⁶ “Uggaṇha” mean learning, “uggaṇhāna” means studying.⁷ The definition of education is to learn, to study, to train oneself. Buddhist education means bringing knowledge and skills to a person, enabling him to translate such knowledge and skills to appropriate situations in life, finally developing discipline, insight and wisdom.⁸ The meaning of Buddhist education is to outline the best life for people and to develop their faculties. It is to foster the highest degree of peoples’ excellence. It aims at all-round development of individuals. Education in Buddhism means to learn about Buddha’s teachings, understand themselves and make themselves most useful to society.

The word education is derived from the Latin word educare which means to bring forth. The word education means “the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction,” especially at a school or university i.e. a course of education. Education means the theory and practice of teaching.⁹ It means the development of habits, attributes and skills which help a man to lead a full and worthwhile life. Education means as a child who has received most of his education at home. Myanmar is a country which places great importance on education. Students need to increase the quality and quantity of education in schools. Education is used to transmit knowledge from the teachers to the learners. Education is what survives when

⁶ Buddhaddatta Mahāthera, A. P, *Concise Pāli – English Dictionary*, (Aggārāma: University of Ceylon, 1955), pp. 296- 297.

⁷ Rhys Davids T. W. and William Stede (eds.), *The Pāli Text Society’s Pāli – English Dictionary*, (Oxford: PTS, 2009), p. 783.

⁸ Nandasena Ratnapala, *Buddhist Sociology*, (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publication, 1993), p. 117.

⁹ Judy Pearsall and Patrick Hanks (1st eds.) and Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (2nd eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

what had been learnt has been forgotten.¹⁰ The ordinary meaning of education is a knowledge of letter.¹¹

The System of Buddhist Education

Theoretical Buddhist education and practical Buddhist education were the first system of Buddhist education in Theravāda Buddhism in Mandalay, Myanmar. Theravāda Buddhism in written form on palm leaves was introduced to Bagan district in the Mandalay region by Mahāthera Shin Arahan and King Anawrathā in the 11th century, Buddhasāsanā (Buddha's teaching) spread throughout the kingdom and Buddhist education developed in the entire territory. Buddha's doctrine and Buddhist literature was the principal role.¹²

Theory and practice are regarded as absolutely different and distinct. Theory is pure thought, while practice is the act of the person. Theory is essentially universal, practice is individual. Theory is thought, which discloses being or essence. Practice is action, which gives us real existence. The basic function of theories is to determine the direction of society. The results arrived at through practice become theory which finds application in the practical actions of the people.¹³

The basis of practice is learning and the benefit of practice is insight wisdom (vipassanāpaññā), knowledge of path (maggañāna), knowledge of fruit (phalañāna), happiness (sukha), peace (saṃti) and realization (nibbāna). This benefit can get only practice and training.

¹⁰ *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 442.

¹¹ Shriman Narayan (ed.), *The Basic Work: The Selected Works of Mahatama Gandhi*, vol 4, (Delhi: Navajivan Publishing House, 1968), p. 181.

¹² Nyo Me Aung and Nwe Nwe Yi, *The History and Development of Monastic Education*, (Yangon: University of Yangon, 2016), p. 26.

¹³ R. C. Pandeya and S. R. Bhatt (eds.), *Knowledge, Culture and Value; World Philosophy Conference*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), pp. 224- 231.

Buddhist Education According to Tipiṭaka

Buddhist education literature or the “Pāli Canon” has three divisions called three baskets (Tipiṭaka). As the name suggests they are written in the pāli language. The baskets individually are called the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Sutta Piṭaka and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.¹⁴ According to Tipiṭaka, there are two factors of Buddhist education. 1) External condition (paratoghosa- the teaching of others) and 2) Internal condition (yonisomanasikāra- wise reflection). There are three sources of wisdom with regard to Buddhism as follows:¹⁵ The three factors of Buddhist education are the basic roots 1) learning (suta), 2) thinking (cinta) and 3) training (bhāvanā) to help to develop knowledge and to attain wisdom. Sutamayapaññā: wisdom stemming from listening, learning and reading. Cintāmayapaññā: wisdom stemming from reflection and contemplation. Bhāvanāmayapaññā: wisdom stemming from further spiritual cultivation, practicing and training. The four factors of Buddhist education are the basic roots 1) good teacher (kalyānamitta), 2) listening (suta), 3) thinking (cinta or yonisomanasikāra) and 4) practicing (bhāvanā) to help to develop knowledge and to attain wisdom.

Monastic Education for Monks and Lay People

The term “monastic” means relating to monks or relating to monasteries or connected with monks or monasteries. The unit of the monastic educational system was thus the organization of young bhikkhus or monks living under the Principle of monasteries of a common teacher or ācariya or upajjhāya. Monks in Myanmar have a long tradition of providing education for rural young monks and novices. Monastic education was the norm in the sixth period and to promote monastic education.¹⁶ Monasteries were the only places where people

¹⁴ Pragati Sahni, *Environmental Ethics in Buddhism; A Virtues Approach*, (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), p. 7.

¹⁵ Thittilla. Ashin (trans.), *Vibhaṅga: The Book of Analysis*, (Oxford: PTS, 2002), p. 410.

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, *Buddhism and State Power in Myanmar*, (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2017), p. 21.

could send their children for education. Education at that time in principle meant the study of morality as understood in the Buddhist religion; it was about “the development of moral and spiritual character” here and hereafter.¹⁷ Educational systems are dependent on a system of knowledge. This knowledge cannot operate without wisdom; consequently, wisdom becomes the principal goal of the education system. A system of Buddhist education was changed by Venerable Mahārathasāra and that pedagogy or system was regarded as the best instructions for learners until now. Parents sent their sons to a monastery to receive education, usually aged six to ten and the exam was when they were 13 years old. These boys were known as kyaung thar, “student” (though this term applies only to “temple boys” nowadays). Students received instruction in reading and writing in Myanmar.

Buddhist monastic education centers teach fundamental Buddhist teachings such as 1) Maṅgalasutta, 2) Siṅgālovādasutta, 3) Sīla. These fundamental Buddhist teachings focus on personal development in cultivating morals, educational and behavioral management. This education gives emphasis to moral, mental and physical development and also diverts the students towards and guide them to follow it.¹⁸

According to Miṅgalasutta, the Buddha delivered all moral virtues into thirty-eight rules. The Pāli word “mingalar” is a very beautiful sound to Buddhist people’s ears. It is well known throughout the world today as a term of greeting by the people of Myanmar. If these maṅgalas are practiced, one can become a good human being for learner’s country, family and society, and also for learner’s present and future life. Should lay people learn the Vinaya? The Buddha teaches that one should be well-versed in Vinaya (vinayo ca susikkhito).

Siṅgālovādasutta includes the avoid fourteen evil ways are the most important factor to evaluate social behavior form that lay people have done various factors or Buddhist ethics. The Buddha explained what was actually meant by worshipping different directions: The way to worship different directions was to fulfil one’s duty and responsibility towards

¹⁷ Dhammasami (Khammai), *Between Idealism and Pragmatism: A Study of Monastic Education in Burma and Thailand from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004), p. 42.

¹⁸ Roger Bischoff, *Buddhism in Myanmar: A Short History*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p. 105.

different people in society.

This morality (sīla) is not concern with social life but only for purification of mind. It prevents one from doing immoral actions and unwholesome things. There are two kinds of morality (sīla) in the Buddhism: They are cāritta sīla and vāritta sīla. 1) cāritta sīla means abiding by the rules of conduct (carana) and performing one's duties and responsibilities. They are many rule concerned with respecting of old aged people and polite manner. The morality (sīla) can bring harmony between human beings and can maintain the good in social community. 2) virattī sīla is called five precepts are instructed to practice and apply in daily life.

Curriculum of Buddhist Education

Curriculum means a course of study in a school, university, college and temple. This curriculum includes subjects such as student's development, learning theories, and practical subjects of Buddhist education. In Mandalay, the fundamental content of Buddhist educational curriculum is the same in all education centers with educational theory, practical experience and teaching methods. The curriculum and learning processes of every subject are integrated with Buddhist principles and utilized to continuously develop students. Including the Buddha's teaching to be a part of life through learning curriculum would be preparation of Pāli literature. The internal learning factors are applied to the learning activities and curriculum, which starts the learning process according to Tipiṭaka and threefold training (tisikkhā). Buddhism has a threefold training relating to precepts, meditation, and wisdom.

Roles of Buddhist Monks

Buddhist monks have many roles in Theravāda Buddhism in Mandalay, Myanmar society. The Buddhist monks' roles are significant for Buddhasāsanā (the teaching of the Buddha) for lay people. The roles of Buddhist monks in education are associated with two kinds of duty (dhūra). Those who are primarily supposed to teach are called ganthadhūra. Granthadhūra meaning 'having books as their burden or duty'. The others are called vipassanādhura. Vipassanādhura meaning 'having meditations as their burden or duty'.¹⁹

¹⁹ Richard F. Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept and Practice, Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Limited, 2008), p. 315.

Buddhist monks obtain knowledge and wisdom, and they can share those for good use to serve the needs of their own monastery in a village. The Buddhist monks have to take care of the monasteries or monastic education centers by cleaning, chanting, and offering of all things to bhikkhus (Saṅgha) in Theravāda countries. Buddhist monks and lay people study dhamma and vinaya or dhamma and practice.

Some Buddhist traditions are changing to modern practice and some traditions are lost in Myanmar. So, Buddhist monks have two kinds of duties. Not only one duty to teach the good Dhamma and Vinaya, but also another duty of their own practice and to control other lay people or meditators.

Roles of Saṅgha or Government to Monastic Education

In Myanmar, Buddhist monks' roles are already studied to monastic education of Saṅgha organization or government. The Saṅgha organization or government has divided the monastic education into the present Buddhist education, as follows: 1) Tipiṭaka education, 2) Dhammācariya education, 3) Pathamapyan education, 4) Nikāya education, 5) Abhidhamma education and Visuddhimagga education, 6) Monastic education, and so on.

The Role of Buddhist Monks as Teacher

Buddhist monks who have the role of teacher, have to teach Buddha's teachings or Tipiṭaka. The roles of a teacher are most important for Buddhist education centers because students can acquire knowledge arising from learning. Buddhist monks have many teaching roles in Theravāda Buddhism. Buddhist monks have the role of teaching as follows: 1) Role of teaching like a snake, 2) Role of teaching for liberation and 3) Role of teaching to be our treasure.

Role of Buddhist Monks as Students

According to the role of Buddhist monks as students, there are eight causes and conditions that lead to knowledge and wisdom, and also related to learning or teaching an educated society. The roles of students are attending class: listening, thinking, asking, reciting, investigating, taking notes, learning and brings.

Role of Vipassanādhūra Monks

The threefold training and the four kinds of development, which are key principles and pertain directly to education. Learning and acquiring knowledge is one aspect of the Pāli word *sikkhā* (threefold training), which means self-training and self-development, so that one acquires the capability to live a good and virtuous life. Our lives depend on learning and training.²⁰ To live a good life one needs to make the effort to improve one's life. one needs to engage in study and training. Training or education is a lifelong pursuit, to be undertaken at all times. It is not limited to the education center. This shows the vital relationship between people and their education. Education (learning and training) becomes one and the same with living a good, virtuous life. Education becomes the primary activity of one's life.

Conclusion

Education is teaching and learning, practicing and training, also answer education is knowledge of letter. Buddhist education is exceptional than other formal education systems because it is not only about the knowledge but also Buddhism is emphasizing on training people with their behaviors covering physical, verbal and mental acts. Theory is pure thought, while practice is the act of the person. Theory is essentially universal, practice is individual. Theory is thought, which discloses being or essence. Practice is action, which gives us real existence. The basis of practice is learning and the benefit of practice is insight wisdom (*vipassanāpaññā*), knowledge of path (*maggañāna*), knowledge of fruit (*phalañāna*), happiness (*sukha*), peace (*saṁti*) and realization (*nibbāna*).

²⁰ P.A. Payutto (Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya), *Education Made Easy*, Robion Moore (trans.), (Bangkok, Thailand: Phli-dhamm Publishing, 2002), p. 4.

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An Analytical Study of Phrakrusangworasitthichote's Educational Administration for Educational Equity among Highlander Youths

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ABSTRACT

Educational Equity is one of the major global obstacles in delaying the achievement of UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Like many other countries, Thailand has struggled to successfully bring all of its children into the educational system in an equitable way. While the government cannot render enough quality education services to underprivileged children, Phrapariyattidhamma School can help fill this gap. This study aimed: (1) to survey the status of educational administration at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, in Hod district, Chiang Mai Province and (2) to analyze the educational administration for educational equity of the school principal-Phrakrusangworasitthichote. The school is recognized as the leading Buddhist Scripture School in the Northern region rendering equitable basic education and Pāli study to underprivileged highland students since 2003. All students are treated fairly and inclusively. With competent teachers and conducive learning environment, the school has achieved the highest number of students who passed Pāli examination in Chiang Mai. The res

applied a qualitative method and on-site investigation as research design. The research instrument was in-depth interview with 5 key informants utilizing the POSDCoRB theory as the analysis framework for 7 administration aspects, which included Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordination, Reporting and Budgeting. The results suggested that it is essential for school leaders to have a clear understanding and right approaches to cope with inequality in education and ability to orchestrate the staff, villagers, and local authorities to be voluntarily involved in the process of strengthening educational equity.

Keywords: Educational Equity, Educational Administration, Highlander Youths, POSDCoRB, SDGs.

Introduction

In September 2015, the United Nations and 193 countries have adopted a new agenda called the Sustainable Development Goals, often called SDGs or global goals, which comprise 17 goals incorporated with 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 (Shachs, 2015)). Among the 17 goals, the SDG4-Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life long learning for all- encompasses seven targets that deal with quality and equality for different phases of education (Unterhalter, 2019). This specific goal plays an important role in catalyzing the achievement of other development goals (Leydon, 2018).

While global community is moving toward Inclusive Education (IE) which is the effective ways to achieve education for all, many children worldwide are unable to gain access to quality education (Whitburn and Plows, 2017). According to the UNESCO, 263 million children globally aged between 6-17 are out of school (UNESCO, 2016). According to this global education goal, world governments have responsibility to deliver universal accomplishment of primary and secondary education by 2030. But unfortunately, this has proven to be a very difficult task especially for underdeveloped countries. This problem falls under the category of 'Educational Equity' and it is one of the major global challenges dealing with the achievement of SDGs (Tang, 2015). Thailand, like other countries, has struggled to successfully bring all of its children into the educational system in an equitable way.

Oftentimes, Thai citizens in remote areas and minority groups, such as hill tribe children, are not offered equal opportunity or access to quality primary and secondary education due to their poverty. Hill tribe people, as known as highlanders, reside in the remote-highland area which spans across twenty provinces located mostly in the Northern part of Thailand. The hill tribes in Thailand include: Karen, Meo, Lahu, Yao, Akha, H'tin, Lisu, Lau and Khamu (Chob Kacha-Ananda, 1997). Chiang Mai has the highest number of hill tribe population with the estimate population of 190,795 (Fujioka, 2002). Highlanders comprise around 2% of the overall Thai population, which currently sits at around 66 million (National Statistical Office, 2020). But despite their low percentage of the whole, highlanders still play an important role in the nation's successful implementation of the SDGs. However, as it stands, highlanders are the most underprivileged group in the country, due mainly to poverty and lack of education.

The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) reveals that it has over 9 million students in its system and about half of them leave school during the middle of their education journey due to financial difficulties (Wipatayotin, 2018)). Like many other schools throughout Thailand, in Hod District, many students could not afford to continue their education after finished lower-secondary level (Matthayom 3).

Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School is the only Phrapariyattidhamma School in Hod and Omkoi District. Many highlander youths in this area, including neighboring communities, have been lacking of opportunity to continue their upper-secondary education. The school was founded by Phrakrusangworasitthichot in 2003 and has been rendering educational services for ethnic minorities ever since in both lower and upper-secondary level (Matthayom 1-6). School officials aim to develop highlander youths academically and ethically. The school utilizes student-centered learning concepts that provide quality education in academics and Buddhist wisdom while raising awareness to preserve cultural diversity and local tradition. In addition, Phrakrusangworasitthichot, the abbot of Wat Ban Khun and the principal of Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, successfully brings villagers and local authorities to be involved in community and educational development.

Data from Office of Office of Phrapariyattidhamma School Educational Service Area Five reveals that, in 2016, the total number of students in upper-level in Hod District are 60, 16 of them (26%) are students of Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School (Office of Phrapariyattidhamma School Educational Service Area Five, 2016). Currently, there are 175 active novice students studying at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School. The majority of these novices come from the Karen, Lahu and Hmong tribes.

Although there is wide array of areas where of the concept of equity in education has been studied and described, there are only sporadic researches done in trying to promote educational equity for highlander youths or ethnic minorities. Building an equitable quality education system for highland's youths to align with the country's goal for sustainable development is unquestionably a challenging task. However, over the years, Phrakrusangworasitthichote's administration has shown that it has made substantial steps towards promoting educational equity for highlander youths in the North of Thailand. The ultimate ambition of this research is to study all the ways that this ambitious aim has been achieved and how it continues to be successful. Research findings and knowledge gained can

shed some light to advance the research on educational equity both in Thailand and international academic sphere.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are 1) to survey the status of educational administration for educational equity at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School and 2) to analyze the educational administration for educational equity by Phrakrusangworasitthichote at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study. The two main purposes of this research were to survey the status of educational administration for educational equity at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School and to study how Phrakrusangworasitthichote, as the school principal, implements and embodies the educational equity principle.

The POSDCoRB model was chosen because it provided a proper framework by which the educational administration can be analyzed and assessed. The functions of POSDCoRB correspond with the fundamental analysis, the development, and the implementation of educational equity along with the development and implementation procedure of equity in education.

The study was conducted at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, Hod District in Chiang Mai Province. The researcher created a set of interview questions as a tool to collect data from 5 key informants includes the principal of Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School (1), the vice-principal (1), and senior teachers (3). The researcher spent 2 months for on-site investigation and made appointments to interview all key informants. Conversations were recorded. All relevant data were collected for later analysis.

Results of the study

The presentation of this research findings is divided into 2 parts consisting of the following: (1) The educational status and achievements of Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School; (2) Phrakrusangworasitthichote's educational administration for educational equity according to the POSDCoRB analysis framework. The findings are presented as follows

(1) Regarding the status and achievements of Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, the school aims to develop students to be well-versed in both worldly and the Dhamma knowledge. It focuses on teaching the students to have virtues and to apply their knowledge in daily practice to become good heirs of Buddhism. To accomplish this, it places importance on both the Dhamma-Vinaya and the *Pāli* language in addition to the common learning subjects. Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School also has the aims to develop students into good role models of morality and positive attitudes. This aim is reflected in their motto to strive to mold each student to become a “Scholar in the worldly knowledge, Sage in the Dhamma, Leader in creating goodness,” and an upholder of the “Viriyen dukkhamacceti”, which means “people who overcome suffering through perseverance”. Wat Ban Khun’s students are trained to become competent leaders in both behavior and proper Buddhist practice while continuing to carry on culture, traditions and local wisdom. This preservation of local culture can be seen through the school’s encouragement of parents and local communities to participate in the management and development of educational institutions.

To support and encourage this group of young people to receive the highest quality basic education, Phrakrusangworasitthichot has set guidelines and developed Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School on the basis of the Four Conducive Conditions as follows.

Buildings, places and environment: A good environment affects effective teaching and learning. This includes the materials, equipment and technology that are used to actualize the plan of the school. Therefore, the area of Wat Ban Khun, including each building, material and equipment, has been planned, selected and meticulously designed to be simple, economical, highly useful, and sustainable. It consists of the following buildings: a 3-building novice’s residence (capable of accommodating about 200 people), a dining hall, a meditation room, school building Group 1 (6 classrooms), school building Group 2 (6 classrooms), library, science lab, computer room, toilets, central administration office, meeting room, teacher’s office, and teacher’s accommodation. There is also a green zone full of gardens for the novices to learn about different plant species and to do recreational and leisure activities as well.

Food: The kitchen at Wat Ban Khun Temple prepare food for the novices, both breakfast and lunch, using various vegetables planted by the novices as ingredients for cooking, and seasonal fruits for meals. Eating utensils that novices use, such as bowls, plates, cutleries, cups, water jugs are made of stainless steel so that they are high quality, sanitary, durable and difficult to damage. Every novice will receive refreshing drinks once in the period

after school. If some novices enter the school, underweight or malnourished, they will receive special nutritional supervision to help keep them healthy and grow up normally. For the sake of unity, everyone must have meal together at the dining hall. Eating separately is prohibited.

People: Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School places strong emphasis on the selection and development of teachers continuously to ensure that they are competent enough to meet the school's standard. The school achieve this by recruiting professionally-licensed teachers that have prior teaching experiences and have graduated in the appropriate field for the subject they are teaching. In addition, the teachers must be good role models. This means they must not be involved with all sorts of self-destructive behavioural vices (*abayamukha*) and must also be able to teach and do various activities together with the monks and novices in an appropriate manner. The school will also take care of the accommodation and other benefits and necessities of the teachers.

Management and curriculum: Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School works under close supervision of both the Basic Education Commission and the Academic Curriculum and Affairs Committee. This can be observed from the management structure diagram. The school has integrated the curriculum structure of the core of basic education into its framework of development designed to meet the students' needs. In that structure, children are the center of learning. Students can learn to their full potential under the principle of "Excellent Discipline, *Pāli* Language and Morality" thus producing quality novices by focusing on the development of the following 5 dimensions: Physical and Emotional Health, Dhamma Education and *Pāli* Language, Thai and English Language Skills, Agriculture and Environment, and Educational Technology.

Throughout the abbot's long and arduous journey of development of the Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, the organization has received many recognitions such as Outstanding award in "Construction and Renovation" temple of Chiang Mai Province (1994), The 2nd Outstanding Management Award for Phrapariyattidhamma School (*Pāli* division) by National Office of Buddhism (2017), Award of Phrapariyattidhamma School with highest number of students who passed *Pāli* examination in Chiang Mai Province by Chiang Mai Buddhist Association Foundation (2020).

The high score of B-NET and O-NET reports and the prestigious awards given to Wat Ban Khun Buddhist school provide testament to the fact that it has successfully created educational equity and a conducive learning environment, that produces high academic standard and attracts and fosters a skilled teaching staff.

(2) Regarding Phrakrusangworasitthichote's educational administration for educational equity according to the POSDCoRB analysis framework, the results are as follow: Planning involves staff involvement & ideas integration ; Organizing comprises simple organizational structure, clarification of responsibilities & community involvement ; Staffing covers qualified teachers with teaching license, fair benefits and effective evaluation system; Directing includes artful communication skill, optimistic attitude, routine meeting & participative management; Coordinating contains good facilitator skill & ability to utilize communities' resources; Reporting can be done through the channels of logbook, Line & in person; and Budgeting includes government funds, donation-based & cultivating economical attitude. The summary of POSDCoRB analysis is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

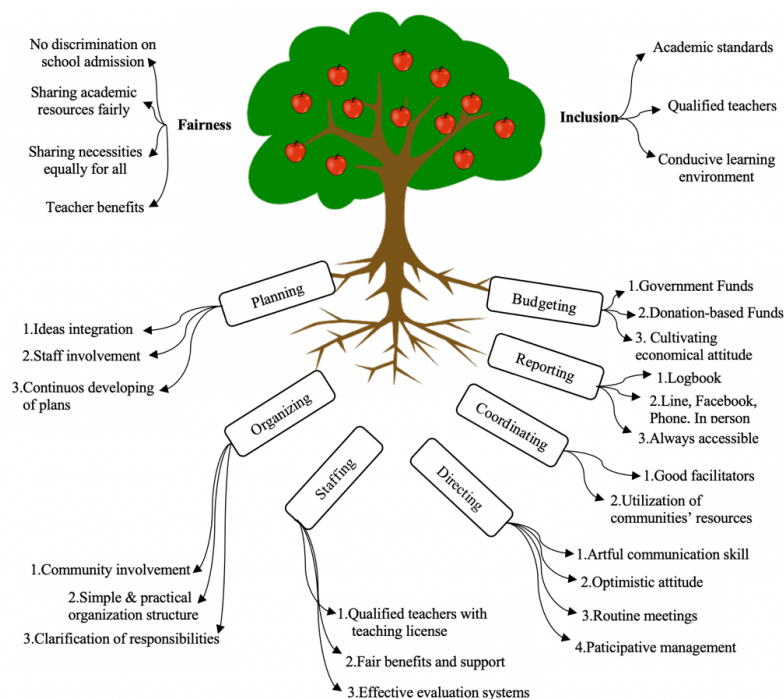


Figure 1.1 Phrakrusangworasitthichote's Educational Administration Tree

for Educational Equity utilizing POSDCoRB theory Designed by Narongchai (2021)

(Apple tree image retrieved from www.clker.com)

Discussion of the study

The discussion below is conducted based on the summary of POSDCoRB analysis shown in Figure 1.1 and the comparison to other research findings in the area of administration of educational equity.

Planning

The planning process is more resolute when school staff involved accept and value the significance of educational equity. Phrakrusangworasitthichote gives high priority in planning and providing clear strategies to his team members. At the beginning of each school term, developing an educational equity blueprint together is a 'must' agenda that requires 100% participation from all parties. Staff are encouraged to be involved in the goal setting, implementation, decision-making and evaluation process.

The planning process should also continue to develop and integrate ideas from all units of the school and community involved in the implementation and establishment of educational equity. Phrakrusangworasitthichote plays an important role in gathering valuable input from the school staff and the local community by acting as a catalyst and coordinator simultaneously. The meeting with teachers and community leaders is conducted regularly to keep people updated and active within the circle of development.

Organizing

Implementing educational equity should be a public agenda, not just an aim confined to the school itself. The process requires cooperation and involvement from all related parties. Wat Ban Khun Buddhist school exemplifies the fact that a school which has a strong bond with community and local authorities has high potential to be successful in organizing for educational equity.

The organizational structure to create and implement educational equity should be simple and practical. At Wat Ban Khun Buddhist school, Phrakrusangworasitthichote simplifies the structure of school management team by dividing it into 4 groups: Academic, Human Resources, General Management and Budgeting. The structure is simple and easy to monitor and direct. He meticulously selects the person in charge of each group and authorizes them to make decisions while still remaining under his supervision. In addition, a less complicate

administrative structure and low level of hierarchy helps to clarify each person's position, roles and responsibilities in the school.

Staffing

To render quality and equitable education, having a skillful and knowledgeable staff is vital. Phrakrusangworasitthichote always seeks to recruit high qualified teachers with prior teaching experience. All basic education teachers are required to have at least B.A. in a specific basic education subject in addition to a professional teaching license. *Pāli* language teachers must have earned at least *Pāli* level 6th certificate. Besides competent academic requirements, a basic level of morality and responsibility is also a prerequisite for staff at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist school.

Phrakrusangworasitthichote provides fair treatment for all staff, both monk and lay people. Everyone is treated in an appropriate way according to their roles. Benefits offered at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School for its teachers are higher quality than other Phrapariyattidhamma Schools in the remote areas. Salaries and other benefits such as accommodation, meals, uniform, internet access and academic training program have a positive effect upon the long-term stay for both monk and lay teachers.

Directing

Since school administration is inseparably related to human interaction, effective directing of educational equity demands that the school principal maintains clear modes of communication and a good attitude in the field of human relations. Phrakrusangworasitthichote is open-minded and committed to participative decision making; he has an active and productive relationship with his staff and community. He is always accessible and has frequent interaction with his staff. Therefore, if anything happens, he can supervise and direct them promptly and properly.

The establishment of the Academic Curriculum and Affairs Committee, comprised of both monk and lay teachers, is an effective means of directing and syncing academic curriculum on basic education, *Pāli* language and Dhamma study. Academic standards produced by this sector provide clear criteria for the proper measurement of educational equity. This committee helps Phrakrusangworasitthichote shape a suitable academic curriculum for highland students. With the right curriculum, Phrakrusangworasitthichote can supply fair and proper assistance for those students who need the most academic support.

Coordinating

Phrakrusangworasitthichote has developed a well-coordinated platform for solving the problem low quality, inequitable education for highlander youths. Besides making merit on special occasions, villagers interact with the school more frequently to support their novices through activities such as offering food, doing dishes or various other types of labor that are needed around the temple and school. This creates a supportive learning environment at the school which yields a positive impact for novices in making progress in their education.

Phrakrusangworasitthichote has utilized the 'School Aid Representative' program as a means of creating a shared responsibility system amongst the temple, school and surrounding community. This program motivates each family in Ban Khun village to volunteer by sending one family member to provide labor services to the temple. Every Monday to Saturday, there are five representatives from the village rotating to serve the temple from 8.30 - 13.00 mainly doing the dishes after breakfast and lunch for over 150 novices. This service frees up the novices' time in order to make it back to class as quickly as possible. This program has created a sense of ownership among the villagers who participate in it. They are committed to facilitate and expedite the process of developing educational equity.

One aspect of coordinating educational equity involves accessing useful resources from the local community. Phrakrusangworasitthichote welcomes local authorities to share the school's facilities when organizing official events such as chanting for the King's family, meditation retreats, community meetings, seminars and trainings, etc. The school also serves as a local knowledge sharing and training center for the community to study Dhamma, learn and practice morality via training programs and conduct other educational related activities. This diversity of service greatly aids in the process of strengthening and continuously developing educational equity.

Reporting

The process of reporting on educational equity requires a strong commitment and coordinating efforts among school administrative staff. Phrakrusangworasitthichote implants such values through a practice of collecting daily reports from all teachers. He requires teachers to write a one-page report in a “log-book” (teacher’s workbook) on a daily basis in regards to what happened in and outside the class room. Each teacher must inform him of this information at the end of the day by sending picture of the report via Line application. His concerns include both academic progress and each student’s well-being. All issues on the report will be investigated by and responded to promptly by Phrakrusangworasitthichote.

The channels for reporting can be done in various forms depending on the school administrator’s preference. Phrakrusangworasitthichote is a very active and accessible person. Both monks and lay staff can contact him at any time via phone, Email, Line, Facebook or in person without a prior appointment. He is always willing to listen and give support to his subordinates. Therefore, he is continuously being informed and updated on all movements at the school.

Budgeting

It is an all-too-common issue among Phrapariyattidhamma school administrators that the government provides inadequate funds that arrive later than expected. To succeed in rendering effective, quality and equitable education, it is of great importance for the school to have the ability to reach out to a wide range of funding sources and implement a suitable financial management system.

In general, Phrapariyattidhamma schools receive financial aid from two main sources- the National Office of Buddhism and their personal donation base. The first source is reliable, but limited. The latter source is hopeful, but unpredictable. Therefore, fundraising is usually received from donations of lay followers who have faith in the abbot or the school principal.

Cultivating an economical attitude for students and staff is a helpful and crucial technique for reducing school expenses. At Wat Ban Khun Buddhist school, both teachers and students are trained to be frugal and mindful in consuming the school’s resources which include things such as food, water, electric, car and paper usage. Being able to differentiate between “Need” and “Want” (or “Use as you Need”) is one of the key principles taught by Phrakrusangworasitthichote. This mentality helps the school cut costs and have additional

budget to funnel towards other necessary payments like purchasing a few extra computers or fixing a broken school bus.

The study of Rangsan Pimchangthong reveals that the general administration problems found in many Pariyattidhamma schools are a lack of learning materials, financial support, and teachers in addition to having irrelevant curriculums and uncondusive learning environments (Pimchangthong, 2005). Although Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School encounters similar challenges, the school is able to manage all serious issues effectively as proven by the numerous recognitions and awards it has received.

The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey by UNICEF reveals that the involvement of local communities and authorities is the crucial factor in rendering quality education for disadvantaged students (UNICEF, 2009). This study indeed endorses the right direction for handling educational equity for highlander youths. Phrakrusangworasitthichote proves this fact through his ability to effectively orchestrate cooperation among temple, school, villagers and authorities in support of educational equity for underprivileged students. One example of his efforts is his recruitment of qualified local individuals to be members of the Basic Education Commission to oversee policy-making and help with school's challenging issues.

According to the study of Wassana Jaroensorn, the most impactful factor in strengthening the success of promoting quality education is the investment on human development especially on finding and developing qualified teachers (Jaroensorn, 2012). Fortifying educational equity through having qualified teachers is also endorsed by the Quality Learning Foundation (Quality Learning Foundation, 2010). Phrakrusangworasitthichote always pays close attention in the recruitment of competent teachers to his school and provides fair benefits such as attractive salaries and free private accommodation. He also encourages all teachers to continue to develop academic knowledge and teaching skills whenever an opportunity to do so is available.

According to National Office of Buddhism's standard, Phrapariyattidhamma schools must provide at least 1 teacher per 20 students. Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School has 12 lay teachers for 175 students which translates to roughly a 14:1 student-teacher ratio. Such a ratio allows teachers to more effectively support students on the development of both thei

academics and overall well-being. This setting helps reinforce educational equity for disadvantaged students.

However, for more benefits to its students, the school should increase the roles and responsibilities of school guidance counsellors as suggested in the study of Chakkaew and her team (Chakkaew et al., 2018). One such role would be to educate both parents and students on the benefit and importance of completing the required minimum education and pursuing higher education. In addition to this, school guidance counsellors should provide a career path for their students after graduation.

Conclusion

The two main purposes of this research were to survey the status of educational administration for educational equity at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School and to study how Phrakrusangworasitthichote, as the school principal, implements and embodies the educational equity principle. The POSDCoRB model was chosen because it provided a proper framework by which the educational administration can be analyzed and assessed. The functions of POSDCoRB correspond with the fundamental analysis, the development, and the implementation of educational equity along with the development and implementation procedure of equity in education. A review of related literature was surveyed to provide the general underlying principles of educational administration and educational equity.

The study was conducted at Wat Ban Khun Buddhist School, Hod District in Chiang Mai Province. The school is known as a successful model Phrapariyattidhamma school in rendering Dhamma learning, *Pāli* language and basic education for highlander youths for over a decade. The school helps reduce the issue of inequitable education that is currently a wide-spread problem among highland children throughout the hilltop communities in Northern Thailand. As a result, it concludes that it is essential for school leaders to have a clear understanding and proper approaches to effectively deal with inequality in education and ability to orchestrate the staff, villagers, and local authorities to be voluntarily involved in the process of strengthening educational equity.

This article suggests that as long as rendering educational equity is not strongly perceived as an integral part of the nation's ultimate education development goals and the philosophy of educational equity is not well-established among top national leaders in education, schools will continue to remain subject to a deficit of necessary supports such as budgets and qualified teachers. If there is not a change in mentality, inequitable education

will persist in the country's education system especially within the Phrapariyattidhamma school system where most of their students are underprivileged.

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Defining Visual Arts or Media to represent Sense of Religion Place in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

During this COVID-19 era, the world is now living with COVID-19. This disease needs to be treated delicately. The widespread of this disease creates an impact throughout many different industries, especially with a social gathering. Social distancing has to be applied to stop the spreading of the disease. In solving the spreading problem, the online platform of any work or study activities has been adopted and applied in supporting social distancing and maintaining regular activities of work and study. Tourism is the one most important hit by this pandemic. In recovering the tourism industry, vaccination is the new hope to humankind. Stop spreading might be the new hope from vaccination while waiting for it. Moving into the online arena brings another hope of getting the tourism industry a new life. Sense of place is the key to connecting tourist and attraction place. Creating a sense of place through visual media can establish such a connection. Using visual art through an online platform might bring tourism to a new start. Using design thinking as a research methodology in searching for

attraction place in religion and identifying the identity of religious place is the key to define the character of religious place. Therefore, matching the characteristic of religious places with visual art characteristics should bring a sense of religious place through the virtual environment later. 360 Photosphere or 360 Spherical panoramas, Color photographs, and Video tours are 3 types of visual art picked to represent religious places the best. At last, all three visual art or media can stimulate tourists in developing a connection between tourist and place. The development of realistic imagery from all 3 visual arts might shed some light on better visual media in religious places. Creating a sense of place environment for tourists to experience without traveling to the actual place while this pandemic is still going might be within reach.

Keywords: Religion; Sense of Place; Visual Arts; Semiotic; Tourism.

Introduction

COVID-19 is the most horrific pandemic that spread throughout the world. It becomes the world problem with the majority impact tourism industry across the board. Many countries halt their airline operations and stop the related tourism industry. The loss in revenue is staggering high in each tourism-related country such as Thailand. In this concern, Thailand adopts its tourism industry and manages to contain the situation despite the collapse.

Presently, the vaccination brings new hope to Thailand tourism. Thailand's public health department issues new rules and regulations for vaccinated tourists to quarantine for 7 days instead of 14 days within a quarantine area. This will include the issue of a vaccination certificate. As for non-vaccinated tourists reduced the quarantine period to 10 days with stumbled around the quarantine area in hope of boosting the tourism industry shortly (Kasemsuk, 2021). Although vaccination can bring new hope to the tourism industry of the more open country for tourism and boosting better and secured transportation without spreading more disease, the vaccination is still not guaranteed safe from side-effects like other well-known vaccines like influenza or measles. CDC published the possible side effect of the COVID-19 vaccine as physical pain and swelling, fever, muscle pain, headache, chill among basic symptoms of getting COVID-19 vaccination shot (CDC, 2021).

During this pandemic, most operation especially education system has been moved into online learning. Most educational institutes are urged to adopt online education and e-learning in letting students study from home alongside "Stay home away from COVID-19". Pandemic shut down all schools across the globe. E-Learning is on the rise and here to stay for the long haul in fighting pandemic situations. There is a significant surge in using online learning software, dictionary online, and video conferencing during this COVID-19 (Li, 2020). Work from home is also another campaign to let people work from the comfort of their home in the hope to reduce social contact and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Tourism should be able to do the same in online virtual platforms.

At first, when tourists come to visit a place, they have physical contact with a place and develop some relationship with a place called the sense of place. The definition for Sense of place can be varied depends on discipline. Basically, in terms of tourism, it involved the relationship between tourists and the place they visit. It usually defines the

characteristic and unique identity of each place that interacts with people as well (Sense of place in Wikipedia, 2021). Therefore, this sense of place is the connection between place and tourist through senses and other elements surrounding that particular place. Religion place is located all around the world. People interact with sacred spirit, tourist can identify the place as attraction place. The relationship of place and people makes the place meaningful. Popularity of people within religion place is well-known by society at some point (Timothy and Olsen, 2006). Religion place has its unique senses to be identified as house of worship. This research intends to find that attribute in sanctuary in defining the place physically through visual arts. The design thinking process is applied to deliver the method of researching the area and identifying the identity of religion's place within the area.

Research Objectives

This research is aimed to:

- 1) Explore the area of Banglumphu as case study for Religion attraction
- 2) Analyze and categorize religion attraction places in Banglumphu
- 3) Identify the sense of religion place for visual arts

Research Methodology

This research is followed a design thinking process to design the virtual environment of sense of place in focus on Religion part for this particular research article. The design thinking process was used in this research. There are 5 stages in design thinking – Empathy, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test (Springboard, 2021). The first stage is the Empathy stage. The qualitative research method has been mainly used to experiment in this research. In-depth interviews and surveys in photography have been used to investigate the area of the case study. The exploration of the area in search of different attractions develops multiple groups of attraction places.

Four categories, in particular, have been identified and focused on to define the identity of the area. There are historical architecture, religion, community, and gastronomy. Religion attraction places will be focused on in this research article. Local people within the case study area have been interviewed and discussed history, lifestyle, and any other related topic about the area in search of significant information. There are 12 of them and the summary of all in-depth interviews will be presented later.

The second stage is the define stage. This is to analyze the problem or information from the define stage. Methods as an affinity diagram, Information architecture, mindmap have been used to categorize information, lay down the structure of the case study area, and break down the problem.

The third stage is the ideate stage. In this stage, idea creation for the solution of the problem has been developed and demonstrated for the wider possible design solution. There is one method that is used in this stage which is active search. It is to find many possible ways to design the solution through online resources or a traditional one. After finishing the search, one or two possible solutions are selected for the next stage – the prototype stage. That is in stage four.

In this stage, the actual design of the solution is developed. All functionality has to work in order to prove the solution of the design. Then, the last stage is the evaluation stage. In this stage, the prototype is tested and evaluated by an expert and actual user. Both methods are called expert review and user testing. The result will be reported as the outcome of this research. The below diagram shows the design thinking process.

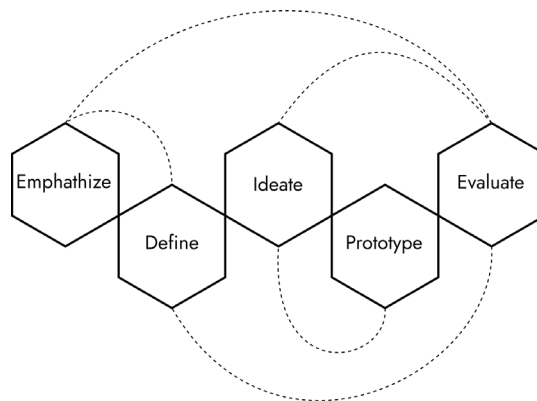


Figure 1: Design Thinking Diagram

Research Result

From the first and second objectives, the research result was found that there are many different categories of attraction places within the area of a case study. Even though the area has been defined as a historical site, some activities have blended in smoothly inside the historical architecture of this area. Four categories have been defined as the identity of this area – historical architecture, religion, communities, and gastronomy.

Focusing on religion categories for this research article, there are 3 types of religious architecture in this area – Temple to represent Theravada Buddhism, Mosque to represent Islam, and Shrine to represent Mahayana Chinese Buddhism and other significant figures/goddesses. In each category used color to represent it in the web design – Orange for Buddhism, Yellow for Islamic, and Red for Chinese Shrine and alike. Wat or temple held most respectful and ancient in the area – Wat Bowonniweth Vihara. This temple has been erected for 250 more years in this area. It is also located a couple of relic of important King Rama of the Rattanakosin era. Wat Chanasongkram is another important temple in this area as adopted by the queen of Luang Chakjessada. Phra Pinklao's Relic has been kept in this temple. Chakkramong mosque is the very first and important mosque in the Rattanakosin era situated in this area. It is the most ancient and respectful for all Muslims around the area. Chao Por Nu shrine is one of the most sacred shrines located on the bank of the Banglumphu canal.

Based on the past history, local people believed that he helped protect the fire from burning the community and protect the area from disaster and all. Each religious place has its own characteristic and particular location that tourists could experience the place in a special way. The experience in visiting each religious place can establish a sense of satisfaction in tourist's emotions. The surrounding of religious place creates a different atmosphere in the sacred of each religion. One temple, in particular, creates a forest-like environment surrounding by sacred figures. The mood of the place develops a mindful environment for laypeople to have a peaceful mind. In such an environment, meditation can develop within a human's mind and calm one's emotion toward the meditative stage. Most temples even situated in the middle of the area cultivates peace and a quiet atmosphere for Buddhists to come and wind down. Mosques can also find the same peaceful environment for focusing on the praying ritual 5 times a day.

Therefore, the 3rd objective, the result for this research article is as in figure 2. It shows how to identify religion's place in the physical environment for tourism. In visual arts though, there are only some of the selected visual art in this research that can represent the sense of place for religion well. Figure 3 indicates the result through expert review and user testing.

All visual arts representations are 360 Photosphere, Panorama photo, B&W photographs, color photographs, video tours, visual storytelling, and sound. For holy place, 360 photo sphere, panorama, color photograph, and video tour and sound have been picked to represent the sense of place for place of worship. Based on user testing results, most users picked 360 photospheres, color photographs, and video tours to represent religious places more than the rest of visual arts and sound.

Religion

		Shape/Form	Chanting	Scent	Space	Signage
1	Wat Bowonniweth Vihara	X	X	X	X	X
2	Wat Chanasongkram	X	X	X	X	X
3	Wat Tritosathep	X		X	X	X
4	Wat Sam Phraya	X	X	X	X	X
5	Wat Sangweij	X			X	X
6	Wat Mai Ammatarod	X	X	X	X	X
7	Wat AimWorranuch	X	X	X	X	X
8	Wat Parinayok	X	X	X	X	X
9	Chakrapong Mosque	X	X		X	X
10	Baan Tuk Din Mosque	X	X		X (IN)	X
11	Luang Chakjessada Shrine	X		X		
12	Chao Por Nu Shrine	X		X		
13	Chao Por Kow Tuk Shrine	X		X	X	X
14	Phra Chao Taksine Shrine	X			X	X
15	Trimullati Shrine	X				
16	Chao Mae Toranee Shrine	X				
17	Chao Mae Tubtim Shrine	X	X	X	X	X
18	Khao San Shrine	X				
19	Ganesha Shrine	X		X		

Figure 2: Show identity of each house of warship

Religion Media

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|---------|
| ✓ 360 Spherical | ✓ B&W Photo | ✓ Visual Story | ✓ Sound |
| ✓ Cylindrical | Color Photo | ✓ Video Tour | |

Figure 3: Media that can represent holy place

Body of Knowledge

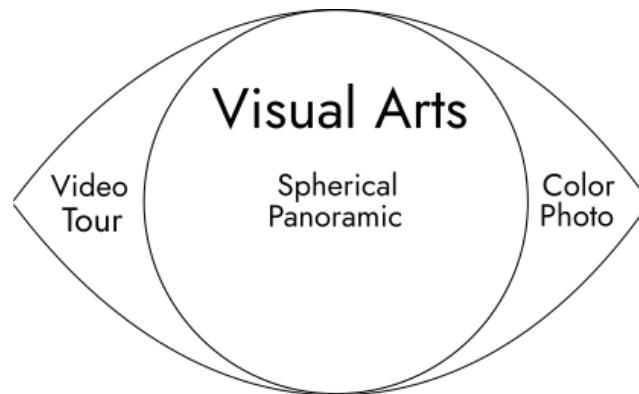


Figure 4: Visual Arts Sense of Religion Place

The above model explains what this research found out in using visual art to represent the sense of place for Banglumphu. Color photographs, 360 photospheres, and video tours would specifically represent the sense of religious place.

The color photograph can express form and environment including the atmosphere of religious place in which create a sense of architectural environment through sighting sense. The form of religious architecture develops the connectedness between tourists and places. Winfried said in "Handbook of Semiotics" about Photography and Sign that the 3D object when projected through photograph process does not change geometrical quality and attribute which can represent that object or place for that matter (Nöth, 1995). Still, an image or photograph can be as powerful as a moving image like a video tour in representing one specific moment in time of recent atmosphere.

In 360 photosphere using a single spot surrounding its environment to create a sense of religious place. Multiple still images establish the virtual sphere-like environment for tourists to sense the place at one moment in time. This virtual sphere-like environment creates a simple effect of being there at that place.

Video tour, on the other hand, creates a sense of moving right along the pathway of community or place in exploring the environment and setting of a place. Moving forward image develops a sense of walking along with the place even though tourist has no control over the movement. In the physical world, tourists can walk anywhere as they pleased. In the visual art of video tours, the creator creates one specific environment for tourists to

watch. On the contrary, tourists have appreciated the feeling of being there and walking along with the place.

Incorporated all these 3 visual arts media into an interesting mixed media should be able to establish a better sense of religious place, otherwise, each individual visual arts can express its own value to connect with tourists.

This body of knowledge can be used in developing a virtual environment using these media to express the character of each place. Tourist experience can develop an interesting attachment through the virtual display without being at the actual place using visual arts. John Berger said in “Ways of Seeing” that words comes after seeing. People recognized things through seeing more. Words cannot replace what we see as visual. Image came to represent something not too far up, but over time, it becomes the one outshined its representative. The image or visual can also express how someone sees something or place in different aspect (Berger, 1977).

Research Discussion

From the research result of the first and second objectives, it was found that there is diversity in sanctuary within the case study area. When discussing holy place or place of worship, it is defined as space or construction that was built for devotion in each religion or belief. There would be a temple, church, shrine, or mosque (Wikipedia, 2021). There are a variety of beliefs coming from the migration of people from the southern part of Thailand and abroad. These people brought a new religion to the area and also a variety of cultures and traditions of gastronomy. The influential religion in this area is Buddhism. The first group of Muslims who was settled in the Rattanakosin era established the very first mosque in this area – Chakrapong mosque.

This mosque mixed different architecture from Roman mix Persian and Arabian style together well (Pipitthanarak, 2018). This mosque became the center of all Muslims around the area including outside the area as well. As of today, many people and cultures from the past have been gone most of it but the sense and feel of the area are still there. The story of each religious place is still told by earlier generations. Even if there is a globalization wave flowing in the area, but the way of life toward religious place can still exist today in the different form to fit into the new era.

Shrine in Latin means the storage of holy book but in terms of place, it is used to pay deity tribute in god or human form (Wigington, 2018). Shrine has a variety of its kind in Chinese Buddhism – Mahayana – as the main belief. There are also shrines with important figures of Thai culture such as Somdet Phrachao Taksin. There is a sacred place as his story in fighting to protect the area. People respect him as a respectful figure. In this religious place's category, color is used to categorize different religious places. Orange is for a Buddhist temple. Yellow is for Islamic Mosque. Red is for all the shrines both the human figure and superficial figure. Color should be able to distinguish religious place and how to identify it later on.

From the research result of the third objective, due to the difference in location and how it was built in the past, some religious places have been adjusted to fit into the new city plan and structure. Since most of the past transportation is through the river or canal, most religious places are located near river or canal. The road had been built long after most religious places were built, then, the main transportation has changed into on land instead. Transportation might not be an attribute to identify the sense of sanctorium well. Space, Sound, shape/form, scent, and signage are what identify as the sense of religious place. Space is for space within the religious place for religious activities. It can be inside or outside. Shape and form referred to the form of religious architecture within the temple. Based on Rudolf's book, form and shape can express the artistic view of architecture. The line and curve attribute convey the symbolic of structure to express its form of architecture. The photograph that captures the architectural form into shape can also express the sense of each architecture through this ever powerful yet simple visual art medium (Arnheim, 1974). Scent means the smell of incense or garland within any religious place. Signage is to give directional and wayfinding toward telling tourists where it is. Toward looking into visual arts, these qualities can be used to pick visual art media that can express those attributes the best. Based on the figure above, in panoramic, both types can represent religious places. Videography in both types can represent religious places well. Sound is the only element of media that can represent a religious place through Chanting. B&W Photograph has been used to represent religious place as to express historical sense. Thomas said that iconic sign can be seen in photograph since it represents the subject in the visual way. Then, photograph can be used as a representative of place in referring to the place (Sebook, 2001).

Conclusion

Pandemic creates a lifestyle change throughout the world. The online environment becomes a new territory for exploring the opportunity. Many industries change their own platform of work into virtual reality with less social. The tourism industry needs to shift its own paradigm as well. It might not work as well in accepting new experiences over a virtual environment. New technology can change all that. Visual art or visual media can also be medium of gaining a better experience for intangible experience between tourist and attraction place – the sense of place in sanctuary. Seeking for the identity of holy place in this particular research article should extend into other attraction places. Defining visual arts in representing the sense of religious place can shed some ideas and establish a new beginning for tourism in the virtual environment. Hopefully, it can establish a new tourism industry and develop hope for a new adventure into the virtual world with exciting creativity beyond the physical world in the future.

Recommendation in order to extends this research further is to as follows:

- 1) Fine art department should collect and update information about all the oratory in the Banglumphu area for reference later.
- 2) Some of the religious places should keep it like it used to be. Renovate the religious place sometimes destroy the historical mark in identifying a sense of history to that place.
- 3) Researcher will gather and develop a virtual map and traditional map for tourist information.
- 4) Collecting in-depth information about each of the religious place and develop a new identity to each religious place for future tourist attraction.

As in future research, more information can be collected and analyzed to develop more detail in living together with the COVID era. The case study area of the research should extend out into Rattanakosin island based on the newly defined map.

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An Analysis of the Roles of Sakka Devarāja (Sakka, King of Devas) in Recent Theravāda Buddhist Societies in South-East Asia

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this article, which is a qualitative literature-based one, is to analyze the roles of Sakka Devarāja in recent Theravāda Buddhist societies in South-east Asia in terms of his textual history as Vedic and post-Vedic Indra and Buddhist Sakka. The research indicates that Sakka Devarāja is a persistent and influential figure who continues to manifest in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Moreover, his roles in these recent Buddhist societies can be well understood in terms of his historical and textual ‘mythical background’ as Indra and Sakka.

Keywords: Sakka Devarāja, deva, tavātimsa devaloka.

Introduction

Sakka Devarāja is a persistent and influential deva who continues to manifest in the Theravāda Buddhist lands of Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. He has performed various roles in recent Buddhist traditions around the region and in general he is regarded as being a symbol of leadership, kingship, morality, piety, patience, and hard-work.

In South-east Asian Buddhist countries, Sakka Devarāja is regarded as a symbol of leadership and good citizenship. He is also seen as an active heavenly figure who has strong associations with the departed Buddha; he is seen as an ambassador or representative of the Buddha and thus many people believe he can intercede in the affairs of gods and men.

The Historical Background of Sakka Devarāja in the Vedic and Post-Vedic Hindu traditions

We begin with an examination of the historical background of Sakka Devarāja in the Vedic and Post-Vedic Hindu traditions. Indra in the Vedas is respected as a king of the gods, warrior of the gods and the god of rain in the Ṛg Veda, which is an ancient Indian collection of hymns and prayers in the Sanskrit language that were dedicated to deities (deva). It is first of the four canonical ‘revealed’ (śruti) texts of Hinduism that collectively form the Vedas (PDH:87). Doniger observes that Indra’s broader nature can be traced back to proto-Indo world. (Doniger, 2005: 4466-4488). Indra is the prime recipient of hymns and prayers in the Ṛg Veda. One legend has it that Indra was born of a human mother and father (Ṛg 4.18). This is highly significant as he is then the only Brahman-Hindu god to be born of human parents. Furthermore, Indra’s birth was highly unusual (Doniger, 2005: 4466-4488).

In the Vedas, Indra and other devas exist in a hierarchical cosmos, one version of which is the three-world scheme (trailokya). Indra inhabits the realm of atmosphere or sky (Flood, 1996: 45), and has a celestial city, Amaravati, frequented by heavenly beings. The beings there do not suffer from pain, sadness or fear, and enjoy the sights and sounds of the singing and game-playing of the apsaras and their gandharva husbands (Hopkins, 1915: 140).

Indra goes by a variety of names in the Vedas. The names Indra, Vāsava and Śakraⁱ ‘mighty one’ are used interchangeably in the oldest texts, and other names include Maghavan, Purendra and Vṛtrahan (Ṛg.1.32).

The characteristics of Indra are quite well described in the Vedas. He is a strong man with golden or red skin who drives a golden chariot and is a skilled horseman. (Ṛg.1.65)

He has a vajra, a white elephant, beautiful nymphs, holy cattle, and a wishing tree. Although he is a troubled god, he is a great warrior. He fights against and defeats the demonic enemies of the gods, the asuras. Indra is a powerful but less-than perfect god. He has various flaws, and when he regularly over-partakes in soma, he tends to be garrulous and boastful (EOH, p.419).ⁱⁱ

Indra performs a wide variety of roles in the Vedas. He loves and helps his worshippers, destroys enemies with his thunderbolt (vajra) (Doniger, 2005: 4466-4488) brings and dispenses rain, keeps rivers flowing (Ṛg.1.13. 1-2) and discovers and makes available soma (Ṛg. 4.26-27), which is like amṛta, the elixir of immortality (EOH: 25).

In the post Vedic-texts, Indra is portrayed as an often-drunk hedonistic deity. His importance declines, and he ends up a minor deity compared to Shiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Devi. His glory starts to fade in the Brāhmaṇas,ⁱⁱⁱ and such references have been dated to around 900 BCE. He is surpassed as creator by Prajāpati.^{iv} Indra is mentioned in a number of texts in the Upaniṣads (PDH:109).^v Indra, as portrayed in the Upaniṣads, is a figure very removed from his warrior king warrior role in the Vedic myths. He is of course regarded as a king of heaven, but he is very subordinate to Brahmā from whom he attempts to learn the true nature of the 'self' amongst other things (Ch.U. 8.9.1.).

Indra's decline is particularly emphasized in the Purāṇas.^{vi} Significantly, it is in the Puranic tales where Indra is revealed to be a title or a position rather than an immortal god (Brahmavaivarta Purananam, Krishna Janma Khanda, 47.50-161). Furthermore, it is in the Puranas that Indra's powers are acquired by the new supreme sectarian gods Viṣṇu and Śiva. Indra's reputation further suffers in the epics, where some of his early strengths become his weaknesses, in particular his phallic powers (Rā.1.47- 1.48). Danielou argues that in the later mythology, Indra is thought to be an aspect of Śiva and is a lesser deity in comparison to the three main gods. However, he stays as the king of all the other gods (Danielou, 1991:106).

Sakka Devarāja (Sakka) in the Theravāda Buddhist texts.

The Sakka that we know in the Theravāda scriptures is a colorful figure who has been born into a universe that is very different to the Vedic-Brahman world. It would seem that the Buddha chose to pick up and recreate Indra into the likeable reformed rogue Sakka

and the Sakka seen in the Theravāda textual tradition is an ambassador from the past who supports the Buddha's new order.

In Buddhism, Indra is remodeled as a popular deity of many names, but he is usually known as Sakka, a name which can refer to fact that he gives generously and thoroughly (DPPN, p. 957). He is almost always spoken of as Sakko Devānam Indo and is ruler of tavātimsa devaloka.

The Buddha, in the Samyutta Nikāya, offers a detailed list of Sakka's many epithets and these reflect his previous and present activities, talents and roles. The list consists in Maghavā, Purindada, Sakka, Vāsava, Sahassakkha and Sujampati (S I 229).

Sakka is a god of great patience and not too bright. He is of course still subject to the conditions of saṃsāra, and is far from free from lust, ill-will and stupidity. He is deeply devoted to the Triple Gem, and he is present for many of the major events in the life of the Buddha. Sakka's roles in the texts of Theravāda are many and varied, and a short summary of some of them will suffice here.

Sakka is king of the deities in the tavātimsa heaven, where he rules like a first among his peers. He is a devoted follower of the Triple Gem, he is present at many of the major points in the Bodhisatta and Buddha's career (J I 65). Sakka, through his legends exemplify and illustrate many aspects of the Buddhist teachings. Furthermore, exemplifies key themes concerned with the roles of the gods in the Buddha's cosmology. The gods like Sakka are in no way of the same ilk as the all-powerful eternal gods of the Vedas and later Hinduism, and Sakka and the gods in the Buddhist pantheon are in fact inferior to the Buddha, arahants and even well-practicing lay people. Furthermore, to be Sakka is to occupy a position; the kings of the thirty-three 'come and go'.

A Comparison of Indra in the Vedic and Post-Vedic Hindu texts and Sakka in the Pāli Canon and Commentaries

The character of Indra and Sakka that we see across the Vedic-Brahmin, Hindu and Buddhist texts is a figure of considerable significance. It seems reasonable to assume that Indra at the time of the Buddha was well-known to the people and worshipped, and this might have been a reason that the Buddha included the role of Indra as Sakka in his 'new' movement.

The Buddha was familiar with Sakka and met him on a number of occasions. The Buddha praised Sakka for his good behaviour (D II 275) and admired him for the merit he had earned, his kingship qualities, and for his personal characteristics such as patience and gentleness. Then, in comparison to the Indra described in the Vedic and later Hindu texts, Buddhist Sakka is a gentle and thoughtful king who is a strong follower and supporter of the Buddha.

According to Marasinghe, Buddhist gods are really different conceptions to the gods of the Vedic and post-Vedic Hindu traditions. Gods, as depicted in the Brahmanic traditions, had the power to offer health, wealth and happiness to their followers if they were pleased or appeased by the worth and correctness of their worshippers' sacrifices, and these boons were offered on a quid pro quo basis (Marasinghe,1997:60). However, in contrast, Marasinghe says that in the new philosophy of the Buddha, grave doubts about the abilities of the gods to grant such favours to human beings existed. Instead what became important was man's ability to improve his lot by living in a virtuous way and by developing his mind. In Sakka's case, Marasinghe continues, rather than the war-hungry soma drinking Indra, there was born a kindly and humane Buddhist lord of the lower heavens (Marasinghe,1997:60).

The Buddha himself makes humorous allusion to differences between the pre-Buddhist Indra and Buddhist Sakka when he describes Sakka's epithets. Whereas Indra was called Purandara (destroyer of cities), Sakka is also known as Purindada (giver in cities, or generous giver in former lives). Another example is whereas Indra had the nickname of Saharāksha (1000 eyes - a reference to his covering with yonis then eyes as a punishment), Sakka was known as Sahassakkha or Sahassanetta (1000 eyes) because he could think of a thousand matters at once (S I 229).

Although he is a very different figure from the Indra of the Vedic and later Hindu world, it seems that the Sakka of the Pāli Nikāyas still has a number of the roles and characteristics of his non-Buddhist predecessor. Of course, he is still the king of the thirty-three and has to battle the asuras but curiously he sometimes displays old Indra's fear or mistrust of ascetics and their powers and Indra's dislike for those who might usurp his kingship. I cannot fully agree with Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera, who opines that that Sakka and Indra as independent conceptions, and argues that none of the personal characteristics of Sakka resemble those of Indra (DPPN,Vol II:p.965)

Special Prof. Banjob Bannaruiji, Lecturer in Peace Studies Program, MCU, talked about this comparison of the concepts of Hindu Indra and Buddhist Sakka. He observed that a major difference is that Sakka in Pali Canon and commentaries was originally a human being, who devoted himself to practice of the seven virtues. Prof. Banjob then emphasizes that Sakka's background in the Buddhist texts is firmly established when compared to Indra's ambiguous origins in the Veda's and post Vedic texts (Interview with Special Prof. Banjob Bannaruiji, Lecturer in Peace Studies Program, MCU via email on 24/2/2019).

Then, some of the developments that occur in the figure and nature of Sakka Devarāja moving from the pre-Buddhist to Buddhist versions of the enduring god have been examined.

A list of the roles of Indra in the Vedic and Post-Vedic Hindu texts (H) and Sakka in the Pāli Canon and Commentaries (B)

A list of the roles of the king of the devas across the two traditions is shown below. It is notable and but perhaps not surprising that a number of roles appear in both traditions. It will be used in the analysis of his manifestations in recent societies.

Table 1: A Set of Roles of **Sakka Devarāja** that presents out of the Hindu (H) and Theravāda Buddhist (B) texts

Role Number	Role
1	God of Storms, War, and Fertility, Warrior (H)(B)
2	Supreme God of the Kṣatriyas (H)
3	Consumer and Purveyor of Soma (H)
4	King and Guardian of Heaven (H)(B)
5	An Ambassador from the Past (B)
6	An Ideal Leader (B)
7	Guardian of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha (B)
8	Student of the Dhamma(B)
9	Guardian of Moral Law (H)(B)

An analysis of the Roles of Sakka Devarāja (Sakka, King of Devas) in Recent Theravāda Buddhist Societies in South-East Asia

We now examine the roles of Sakka Devarāja in various recent South-east Asian Theravāda Buddhist countries and traditions in terms of his historical textual ones.

Special Professor Banjob Bannaruji offered further helpful comments concerning Sakka Devarāja and the role he has and continues to play in Buddhist countries like Thailand. He commented that Sakka is still a significant figure in recent Buddhism. Moreover, he stated that in Buddhist countries like Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, Sakka played and continues to play a crucial role because of the influence of Buddhism. In other words, his career has benefited from him being picked up by the Buddha (Interview with Special Prof. Banjob Bannaruji, Lecturer in Peace Studies Program, MCU via email on 24/2/2019).

Sakka Devarāja, or Phra In, as he is commonly known in Thailand, is a well-known and popular figure who has played a wide range of roles in Thai history and recent-day society. He has long been studied, portrayed and worshipped in Thai society.

The first role of Sakka Devarāja in recent Thai society is that of him being a symbol of a good and worthy leader (roles 5 and 6), and his image can be seen in many places around the kingdom. In fact, Sakka Devarāja is the symbol of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration home site). According to the BMA, their main institutional symbol depicts Phra Indra, who is the keeper of Amara-wadee. In the image, Phra Indra carries his three-bladed weapon and is seated on his white elephant, Erāwana, whose four ivory tusks signify celestial status. According to the BMA, Sakka Devarāja is Bangkok's 'Symbol of Service,' and embodies the roles and figure of the Mayor of Bangkok.^{vii}

The second role of Sakka Devarāja in recent Thai society concerns him as a figure who is the focus of various kinds of devotional activity (roles 1, 5 and 6) (Sawarin, 200: 97-108).

Indra is the god of good deeds and is the king that governs all the gods in the heavens. Indra has a long history in Hindu-Brahmanism; and one of his most persistent roles has been to look after the happiness of those in the realm of humans. However, in the modern era, very few people attach importance to Indra and similar gods, and very few images of Indra exist. However, Sawarin believes that despite this lack of knowledge and interest in Indra, th

king of devas actually has a far more pervasive influence on the lives of Thai people. One persistent belief in Thailand is that Indra is a prototype of good behavior. He is an exemplary figure that people worship and adapt as a role model (Sawarin, 2000: 97-108).

Sakka (as Phra In) is a deity who is known to Thai Buddhists for a number of reasons. One reason is that a lot of information about him is recorded in the Tipitaka and commentaries. This information is often used as teaching material by monks who give Dhamma talks. As Sawarin argues, Sakka is a virtuous and inspiring role model for Thais because he cares for humanity and teaches the values of self-effort. It seems that in this age of uncertainty of economics and climate, many Thais need a compassion deity who cares for their happiness, helps them to overcome grief and sorrow and lead more peaceful lives (Sawarin, 2000: 97-108).

In fact, there are a number of large and interesting images of Sakka around Thailand. In Bangkok, two that receive worship are the image of Phra-Indra on Erāvana, located at Wat Thewarat Kunchorn Worawihan, near Thewet Market and an image of Phra Indra located in front of the Amarin Plaza. Yet another important image of Phra Indra on Erāvana (actually there are four images) is located on the second terrace of the central prang of Wat Arun, which is one of the kingdom's chief temples. According to Emmons, Phra Indra features in a second part of the central prang as the prang is topped with a thunderbolt, which is Indra's principle weapon (Emmons, 2018:26).

In the beliefs of many Thai people, Indra is a great god who cherishes the health and happiness of all human beings. He causes the rain to fall at the right time and in the right amount, keeps the land productive, and helps businesses to function smoothly. He helps to keep away evil and enemies. Thais therefore pay respect to Indra in order to protect themselves, their families and their broader communities (Sawarin, 2000: 97-108).

When people ask for something from Indra, they have to be practicing a good and moral life, and in particular be performing meritorious actions such as offering food to monks, giving alms to others, and participation in public projects. These acts are really examples of the practice of Sakka-dhamma. Furthermore, the worship of Indra is usually done inside some kind of Buddhist framework.

As Sawarin mentions, some Thai people make offerings to Phra Indra in front of his images in public places, whereas others do so from their homes. The ceremonies proceed in stages and involves certain key steps. People light incense, pay homage to the Buddha, and then offer several levels of prayers to Phra In (Sawarin, 2000: 97-108). They also offer auspicious items such as particular fruits and green drinks. The first level of prayer is a broader one; more of a general invocation. It is followed by a more specific request or wish for help or protection, and they may also invoke Erāvana's assistance at this stage. They then hold up their offering of food and drinks, and take their leave.

These chants and ceremonial procedures that take place in the home are of interest. First, the idea of people offering items to a deva perhaps in some hope of gaining the deva's graces seems rather un-Buddhist. However, the Buddha, when discussing the values of having wealth for lay folks, taught five ways of sharing wealth that are beneficial for lay people, one of which was, as P.A Payutto observes, the offering to devas (devatā-bali) (Payutto, 2008:750). So, the idea of making offerings to devas is not totally foreign to the religion. But, as P.A Payutto further explains, within Buddhism it is done in a spirit of friendly co-existence (Payutto, 2008:750). Strictly speaking, Buddhists are allowed to show friendship, respect or even assistance to devas through their offerings, but their offerings should not be propitiatory, supplicatory, and nor should they be requests for favours. This suggests that this process of giving offerings to Indra then harks back to his Vedic-Brahmanic roots. It of course also needs to be said that the invocation to Indra is enveloped in a Buddhist shell. The worshippers first chant their respect for the Buddha. Then, the practice of offering things to Indra, and requesting his grace represents a present-day phenomenon that has built into it elements of both Hindu Indra and Buddhist Sakka.

As in Thailand, Sakka Devarāja has had a long history in Myanmar, and his history continues to impact upon recent Buddhist society in Myanmar. It is clear that Hinduism, along with Buddhism, arrived in Burma during ancient times, and as Taw Sein Ko notes, both names of the nation are rooted in the Hindu faith. The term 'Burma' was the British colonial equivalent of the first half of Brahma Desha, which was an ancient name of the region, and the term 'Myanmar' is a regional transliteration of Brahma (Taw Sein Ko, 1998:4). In Myanmar, Sakka Devarāja is referred to as Thagyamin (B. သိကြားမင်း), which is from Sanskrit ॐ Śakra).

One role of Sakka as Thagyamin in Myanmar is as leader of the powerful nat spirits, a task he has carried out since he was appointed to do so by King Aniruddha (r. 1044 –1077). The king was attempting to reform Buddhist and animist practices in Pagan, and he thought that Thagyamin might be the best figure to herd the nats and their worshippers in the direction of the Triple Gem. Thagyamin's role then and now is to effectively maintain a harmony between the ancient and persuasive powers of the nats and the all-encompassing teachings and practices of the Buddha. We can see then that Thagyamin is acting as a guardian and supporter of the Triple Gem (role 7) and as an ambassador (role 5) as he maintains a balance between two traditions.

The Feast of the New Year as practiced to this day in Myanmar is an ancient celebration that acquired new meaning with the arrival of Buddhism into Ancient Myanmar and is a celebration that involves Sakka in a key role, as it marks the annual visit to earth of Sakka (Maung Htin Aung, 1959:23).

The setting is a hot and dry one; the weather has been hot and dry since early March. The rice had been harvested, gathered and celebrated at the full-moon festival of Tabaung in March, but it is now almost mid-April, and the weather and the enforced holidays are trying the patience of even the most patient Myanmar farmers and oxen. However, there is a sense of hope in the air because the feast of the New Year is on its way. Thagyamin, the king of the gods is about to descend down to the earth on his yearly visit, which will last two days. How appropriate it is for Thagyamin to mark the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. He is after all the ancient god of rain and thunder, and by virtue of those powers, a fertility god.

Thagyamin spends the last two (sometimes three) days of the old year in the human realm, and his precise time of ascendancy brings in the New Year. The celebration typically goes on for three days and sometimes lasts for four days.

During these three days (or four days) older people tend to fast and abide by the Eight Precepts or Ten Precepts. They usually visit temples and pagodas and make merit by offering food to the monks. Children are encouraged to behave well and are taught that the King of the devas, Thagyamin, is in town. He has with him his two massive volumes, one bound in dog-skin, the other bound in gold. In the former he notes the names of those who

committed bad deeds over the course of the year. In the latter, he notes the names of those who performed meritorious acts. (Maung Htin Aung,1959:23)

Thagyamin's arrival and departure from earth, are marked by the shooting of canons and guns organized by the authorities. Householders hold up flower pots full of flowers to greet him, and they acknowledge his ascension by reverently pouring the water from the pots out onto the ground. As they do so, they pray for good luck, the right amount of rainfall, crop fertility and happy and healthy families. All of these in-house activities are carried out in a spirit of reflection and mindfulness, which is in marked contrast to the riot that is developing on the streets, for as Maung Htin Aung observes, the New Year's festival is also the water festival (Maung Htin Aung,1959:24).

It is clear that the New Year's and water festival that takes place in what is predominantly Buddhist Myanmar features Sakka Devarāja in roles that are more Hindu than Buddhist in origin. As Dr Htin Aung notes, a lot of it seems like Brahmanism that gets a Buddhist covering (Maung Htin Aung,1959:31). Thagyamin still retains elements of his Vedic-Brahman past as Indra, many Myanmar folk still call the present era of Buddhism 'Thagya's Era Buddhism.' He goes on to say that the early chronicles record that Sakka acted as one of the heavenly constructors of the city of Prome, as it was foretold to flourish in the Pyu Kingdom. Importantly, Thagyamin is also said to have helped in the construction of Shwezigone Pagoda and other famous buildings of worship in Pagan (Maung Htin Aung,1959:33). Sakka also helped Aniruddha's father because Pagan was intended to be the center of a great kingdom. When he gained the throne of Pagan, Aniruddha actually needed little help because he had received from his father Sakka's 'Lance of Victory (Maung Htin Aung,1959:34).'

So, how do Thagyamins's activities or manifestations in recent day Buddhist societies compare to the list of roles? The Thagyamin we see in Burmese legends and festivals is a blend of the historical Hindu and Buddhist figures. He is clearly an ambassador from the past (role 5), as he is part of bringing the Hindu tradition into modern society and into Buddhism, and because he serves as a historical link between the Nat traditions and Theravāda Buddhism. Further, he seems to be an ambassador for the Buddha to this day as he is generally perceived to be an active and ever-present deva; one who is concerned with the welfare of living beings and one who is able to intervene in human affairs. Thagyamin is certainly more of a builder of cities than a destroyer. In this way, he is more Buddhist than Hindu, because

the Indra of old was the famous destroyer of cities. He is in general a keeper of the moral law (role 9), and his keeping of golden and dog leather books see him as at least a record keeper if not a judge! But finally, and importantly, although he is clearly a deva of great power, his activities are usually centered around the mundane. He is a leader and he leads the ordinary folk in the direction of the Triple Gem (roles 6 and 7).

Sakka Devarāja manifests in a variety of ways in present day Cambodian society, and these are similar to his appearances in Thailand, Myanmar and Laos. He is mentioned in chanting that monks perform every day. He is a folk figure who appears in legends, poems and art. He is key player in Cambodia's rain festival. He is well represented in some of the great religious monuments of Cambodia, including Angkor Wat. However, a very striking example of him as Sakka manifesting in Cambodia's extant religious architecture is his presence at the Angkor Thom site, which is based on his heavenly kingdom, and which according to Professor Bousellier is the City of Sakka Devarāja (Bousellier, 2007). Moreover, the heaven of the thirty-three, with its palace, assembly hall, and pleasure gardens is the Bayon, which lies at the very center of Angkor Thom. It is in the Bayon that the gods meet on sacred days. The walls of the city, which are huge and it seems unbreakable, are in the image of those of Indra's city. Incredibly, the city itself tells the paradigmatic story of Sakka Devarāja's (as Sakka) battle with the asuras. (Bousellier, 2007).

Sakka Devarāja, the persistent character that he is, continues to manifest in some of Cambodia's incredibly Hindu and Buddhist religious architecture. At Angkor Thom, the paradigmatic myth concerned with his leadership of the devas in their battle with the asuras is captured for people in modern times to think and wonder at. Further, Sakka is a great ambassador (role 5); one of his key roles is to communicate the knowledge of the Buddha's religion down to the folks to come, and this happens with the help of those wonderfully skillful and creative artists and their companions knowledgeable in the cosmological texts and in the Buddha's teachings. Furthermore, here we see Sakka's role in the development of the concepts of Buddhist kingship (role 4), a role that continues to influence Buddhist kingship in modern Southeast Asia.

Sakka Devarāja manifests in various ways in in present-day Laos Buddhist. He often does so in association with the colorful elephant, P. Erāvana, S. Airāvata. However, the area of manifestations of Sakka Devarāja in recent Lao society of focus here is his important role in

the Lao version of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Phra Lak Phra Ram (L.ພຣະລັກພຣະຣາມ), which many think of as being one of the nation-wide classics of the Lao folk. It is an adaptation of Valmiki's Hindu epic, the Rāmāyaṇam. The Rāmāyaṇa arrived in Laos much later than it had in Cambodia and Thailand, so it was even further removed from its original Hindu form.

As Reynolds next observes, Indra, who is a particularly significant deity in the Theravāda tradition, is very active in this myth, listening to the concerns of humans and intervening in their affairs. He facilitates the rebirth processes that result in the births of two of the main characters, Ravana and Rama (Reynolds, 1982). How can we interpret Indra's role in this classic with the list of roles we made for Sakka devarāja? Certainly, Indra's activities are consistent with his roles in the Vedas. He is a most powerful figure, a king of devas, who intervenes in the lives of humans (roles 1 and 4). Indeed, as noted he enables the births of two of the principal characters, Ravana and Rama, the latter being the Bodhisattva. In a way, it makes sense that he, as the supreme god of the Kṣatriyas (role 2), should 'direct' the action in this rendition of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is after all a Kṣatriya text. Finally, we note that the historical story fits into its Jātaka shell. Historical Indra, in that age when the gods were much more active participants on the human realm, as Sakka, fits into the new universe prescribed by the Buddha (role 7 and 9).

Conclusion

The main objective of this article was to analyze the roles of Sakka Devarāja in recent Buddhist societies in terms of his textual history as Indra and Sakka. The research shows that Sakka Devarāja is a persistent figure, and he maintains a presence and influence in the South-east Asian countries that we have analyzed, which were Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Furthermore, the research shows that his roles in recent Buddhist societies can be better appreciated when analyzed in terms of his historical and textual background as Indra and Sakka. Sakka Devarāja's ongoing presence and influence in the region manifest in the areas of kingship and government, devotional practices, folk beliefs, festivals, drama and theater, and architecture and art. Sakka Devarāja gains respect and devotion precisely because he is an important part of the Buddha's sāsana and because many people see him as an ambassador or representative of the Buddha. Sakka Devarāja, in modern Buddhist societies retains elements of Old Vedic-Brahmanic Indra; he keeps his connections rain, thunder and lightning, and thus life, fertility, and

prosperity. However, within Buddhist societies, as Sakka, his function and roles are nestled within a Buddhist framework.

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¹ Ṛg.1.10.5: 'To Indra must a laud be said, to strengthen him who freely gives, that Śakra may take pleasure in our friendship and drink-offerings. Him, him we seek for friendship, him for riches and heroic might. For Indra, he is Śakra, he shall aid us while he gives us wealth. (tr. Griffith)

² **Soma** (Sanskrit: soma) a Vedic ritual drink of importance among the early Indians. It is mentioned many times in the Ṛg Veda, and the 114 hymns of the ninth book of the Ṛg Veda are concerned with the soma sacrifice. (EOH, p.419)

³ The **Brāhmaṇas** are a number of prose commentaries attached to the Vedas. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, Brahmana, Encyclopedia Inc, Accessed Feb. 9th, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brahmana>)

⁴ **Prajāpati** refers to the primordial creator or lord of creatures. Here, the term is an epithet of Brahmā. (Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, 1982, p. 350)

⁵ The **Upaniṣads** are philosophical and mystical writings included in the śruti part of Vedic literature as its 'end' or closing part (hence called summarily also Vedānta). (PDH, p.109.)

⁶ The **Purāṇas** are religious works of Hinduism, mostly in verses, which contain legendary and mythological versions of creation, history and destruction of the universe with its divine, human and subhuman inhabitants, sometimes in great detail and dramatic narration. (PDH, p.83.)

⁷ **Amara-wadee** is a reference to Amaravatī, Sakka Devarāja's heavenly city in Tāvātimsa devaloka in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions.





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