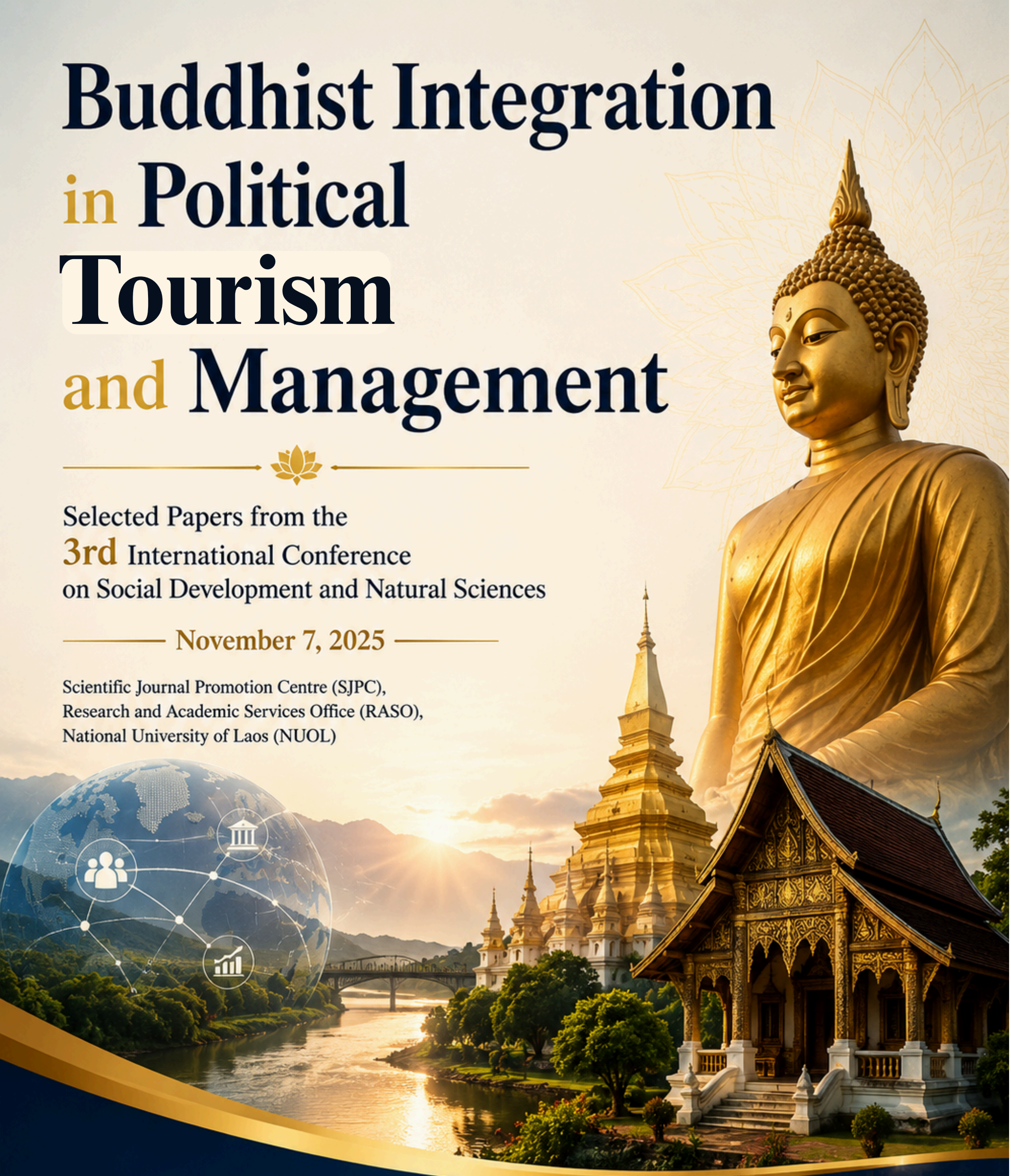
Buddhist Integration in Political Tourism and Management

Selected Papers from the
3rd International Conference
on Social Development and Natural Sciences

November 7, 2025

Scientific Journal Promotion Centre (SJPC),
Research and Academic Services Office (RASO),
National University of Laos (NUOL)



Phra Krusanghaviriyakij *et al.*

Editors
Phra Udomsitthinayok
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Preface

This volume is a collection of selected academic articles presented at the 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Natural Sciences, held on November 7, 2025, and jointly organized by the Scientific Journal Promotion Centre (SJPC), the Research and Academic Services Office (RASO), National University of Laos (NUOL), and collaborating institutions.

The articles included in this volume cover a wide range of topics related to Buddhism, education, culture, social development, tourism, public administration, and justice. These studies reflect contemporary academic perspectives and practical approaches to addressing social challenges in both local and international contexts.

The contributions presented in this collection emphasize the application of Buddhist principles, social innovation, community development, cultural heritage, democratic citizenship, and sustainable development. Collectively, they demonstrate the important role of interdisciplinary knowledge in promoting peaceful coexistence, ethical leadership, and social well-being.

It is hoped that this publication will serve as a valuable academic resource for scholars, researchers, students, and the general public. The editor sincerely thanks all authors, reviewers, conference organizers, and supporting institutions for their contributions to the success of this publication.

Phra Udomsitthinayok
Kuanchanok Laosunthara

Editors

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Buddhist Integration for Developing Democratic Youth in Ayutthaya Province

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Abstract

This article presents the essential findings on integrating Buddhist principles to develop youth as democratic citizens in Ayutthaya Province, a region rich in religious and cultural heritage. The integration of Buddhist teachings specifically the Threefold Purity (right bodily, verbal, and mental conduct) and the Four Brahmavihāras (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity) was linked to youth development focusing on moral integrity, social consciousness, and civic responsibility within a democratic framework.

The findings revealed that embedding Buddhist principles in learning activities such as meditation practice, value-based learning, and volunteer service led to significant changes in both behavior and attitudes. Youth demonstrated improved discipline, respect for rules, reduced violence, greater altruism, and more constructive participation in community activities. Their development aligned with Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) three dimensions of democratic citizenship: personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizens.

From the synthesis, a Dhammic Democratic Youth Model was formulated, comprising three levels: (1) inner development (inner peace) through mindfulness and moral cultivation, (2) relational development (relational peace) through compassionate and respectful communication, and (3) social development (social peace) through civic participation and social justice initiatives. These processes collectively nurture youth to become "ethical democratic citizens" with moral awareness, wisdom, and responsibility forming the foundation of a stable and sustainable democratic society.

Keywords: Buddhist Integration; civic development; democratic citizenship; moral education; youth empowerment.

Introduction

Developing youth as democratic citizens is a vital mission of both the state and society, as youth represent the driving force of a nation's future. A stable democracy requires citizens who are ethical, rational, and actively engaged in civic life (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). However, contemporary Thai society continues to face challenges in cultivating such citizens. Many young people still lack a deep understanding of civic rights, duties, and their constructive roles in democratic participation. The rapid influence of digital technology and consumerist culture often leads to weakened moral consciousness and diminished public responsibility (Creswell, 2018).

Ayutthaya Province, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, provides a distinctive context for addressing these challenges. As a province rich in Buddhist and cultural heritage, it has strong potential to serve as a model area for youth development grounded in Buddhist values. Historically, Buddhism has served as a moral foundation of Thai society, shaping ethical behavior and promoting social harmony. Therefore, applying Buddhist principles to strengthen democratic consciousness among youth is both essential and timely. Notably, the Threefold Purity (sucarita 3 - right conduct of body, speech, and mind) and the Four Brahmavihāras (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity) provide practical guidance for balancing moral integrity with peaceful coexistence (Payutto, 1998; Wasi, 2014).

This perspective aligns with Political Socialization Theory (Easton & Dennis, 1969), which explains that civic and political behavior is learned through major social institutions - family, school, community, and religion. Integrating Buddhist ethics into these institutions can therefore establish a moral foundation alongside democratic learning about rights, responsibilities, and equality. Moreover, the Democratic Citizenship framework proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identifies three types of citizens personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented - that correspond to Buddhist ethics emphasizing responsibility, compassion, and social justice.

From a psychological standpoint, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) demonstrates that individuals learn through observation and imitation of role models. Monks, teachers, and community leaders can thus serve as moral exemplars, inspiring young people toward ethical participation in civic life. Furthermore, Galtung's (1996) concept of Positive Peace broadens the notion of peace beyond the absence of conflict to encompass structural justice and harmonious social relationships - an idea that resonates strongly with the Buddhist principles of compassion and equanimity (Payutto, 1998; Galtung, 1996).

Integrating Buddhist principles into democratic youth development therefore represents a pathway for uniting moral cultivation with civic participation. The overarching aim of this study is to promote in youth a sense of ethical responsibility, respect for human dignity, and the capacity for peaceful and constructive social engagement - contributing to a morally grounded and sustainable democracy.

Accordingly, this article, Buddhist Integration for Developing Democratic Youth in Ayutthaya Province is organized into four main sections: (1) Buddhist Integration

as a Theoretical Framework, exploring relevant Buddhist doctrines and supporting theories; (2) Applying Buddhist Integration to Youth Development in Ayutthaya, analyzing local practices; (3) The Effects of Buddhist Integration on the Development of Youth Democratic Citizenship; and (4) Synthesizing a Model for Sustainable Democratic Youth Development through Buddhist Integration, presenting an integrative framework based on Buddhist ethics and positive peace.

Through these four interconnected dimensions, this study seeks to advance both theoretical and practical insights into the integration of Buddhism and civic development in Thailand.

1. Buddhist Integration as a Theoretical Framework

1.1 Core Idea of Buddhist Integration for Whole-Person Development

Buddhist integration refers to linking Buddhist teachings with contemporary social contexts to develop the whole person body, speech, and mind toward right conduct (sammā-paṭipatti) and public responsibility (Payutto, 1998; Wasi, 2014). It is not merely moral preaching but designing mechanisms that transform values into social capability and moral capital.

Threefold Purity right bodily action, right speech, right intention—serves as observable behavioral standards (Payutto, 1998).

Four Brahmavihāras loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity serve as relational standards for equitable, non-harmful, dignity-affirming coexistence (Wasi, 2014).

Together they connect rule-guided norms and inner virtues as a moral code for youth on the path to democratic citizenship.

1.2 Linking Buddhism to Political Socialization

Political socialization explains how youths' political values and behaviors are learned through family, school, peers, media, and religion (Easton & Dennis, 1969). Embedding Buddhist principles in these institutional practices gradually shapes civic behavior:

Family: Use the Threefold Purity as household norms model responsible speech and compassionate conflict management.

School: Integrate the Brahmavihāras into civic courses, respectful debates (equanimity), and service-learning (compassion).

Religious Community arenas: Provide peaceful public forums, empathic listening, and deliberative decision-making in a benevolent atmosphere.

Buddhist teachings thus function as a moral script guiding political socialization toward quality citizenship learning not only political values but how to be human together with ethics and wisdom (Payutto, 1998; Easton & Dennis, 1969).

1.3 Translating Virtue into Skills via Social Learning

According to Social Learning Theory, behavior develops through modeling, reinforcement, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Applied to Buddhism:

Buddhist role models (monks/teachers/leaders) demonstrate democratic practice in action.

Value-based reinforcement recognizes speech aligned with the Threefold Purity and prosocial acts aligned with the Brahmavihāras.

Scaffolded participation raises roles from small tasks to leading dialogues/projects, building self-efficacy.

Thus virtue to civic skills that can be observed, assessed, and scaled.

1.4 Mapping to Democratic Citizenship

Within Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework:

Personally Responsible: grounded in self-discipline and the Threefold Purity.

Participatory: the Brahmavihāras function as a shared relational language for listening, deliberation, and joint decision-making.

Justice-Oriented: loving-kindness and compassion motivate attention to the vulnerable and pursuit of structural fairness through nonviolent means.

1.5 Operationalization (Indicators)

Right Speech Democratic communication: adherence to dialogue norms, avoidance of insults, reason-giving.

Loving-kindness/Compassion Service participation: volunteer hours; ability to collaborate across differences.

Right Intention/Equanimity Conflict management: use of deliberation/mediation.

In conclusion, Buddhist integration works on two levels inner virtue (Threefold Purity/Brahmavihāras) and social institutions (socialization/social learning) forming a social architecture for learning democracy. It moves youth from self-discipline to participation to justice through a practice reflection cycle under norms of right speech and equanimity, contributing to positive peace at community and provincial levels.

2. Applying Buddhist Integration to Youth Development in Ayutthaya

2.1 Applying Buddhist Integration in the Local Context

Ayutthaya Province possesses rich religious and cultural capital, with temples, schools, and communities closely interconnected. Temples serve as centers of spirituality and morality, schools as centers of academic learning, and communities as arenas of real-life practice. In this context, Buddhist integration is not merely moral instruction in classrooms but a systematic orchestration of experiences that shapes youth through learning processes linking religion–education–society (Na-rangsi, 2018).

Buddhist integration emphasizes embedding Dhamma principles in youths' daily lives, such as:

employing the Threefold Purity to cultivate behavioral discipline, regulate speech, and refine wholesome intentions;

employing the Four Brahmavihāras to foster understanding, respect for difference, and non-harmful participation.

In addition, the Four Iddhipāda (chanda, viriya, citta, vimaṃsā) are applied in youth development activities to nurture intrinsic motivation, encouraging youth to be eager to learn, persevere, and examine themselves rationally—consistent with moral youth development (Maneechote, 2022).

2.2 Forms and Processes of Buddhist Integration in Youth Activities

Studies indicate that integrating Buddhist principles into youth development can take several forms, such as:

1. Buddhist-Oriented Learning in Schools

Many schools in Ayutthaya have developed "integrated moral curricula" that embed Buddhist concepts within subject areas e.g., civics, arts, or history to promote an understanding of democracy in its moral dimension, not merely as law or politics.

2. Service and Social Engagement Activities

These activities enable learning through practice e.g., caring for older adults, environmental conservation, or public-benefit projects with monks, teachers, and community leaders serving as spiritual mentors who guide youth to understand selfless service and participation from a Buddhist perspective.

3. Mindfulness Training and Dialogic Practice

Several temples such as Wat Na Phra Meru and Wat Yai Chaimongkol organize meditation retreats where youth learn mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom, alongside contemplative/dialogic conversations that train listening and respect for differing views. This cultivates a culture of right speech and equanimous listening, which are core to peaceful democracy (Payutto, 1998).

2.3 Translating Doctrine into a Moral Pathway for Youth Development

Transforming Buddhist doctrine into youth development is not abstract preaching but turning doctrine into life skills. Key pathways include:

Threefold Purity, Responsibility & Constructive Communication Youth learn to think, speak, and act with reason and moral restraint foundations for high-quality public deliberation.

Four Brahmavihāras, Empathic Attitudes & Understanding Others. This promotes respect for rights, equality, and human dignity - central to democratic society.

Four Iddhipāda, Intrinsic Motivation & Positive Perseverance Youth learn to set goals, sustain effort, and reflect prudently on consequences.

These processes blend moral learning with civic practice, enabling youth not only to understand Buddhist principles but to apply them in everyday life.

The application of Buddhist integration in Ayutthaya is distinctive because the area's religious culture is deeply rooted in people's lives. Developing youth through Buddhist integration is thus not about creating something entirely new but about revitalizing the community's inherent strengths so that they function as contemporary institutions of moral learning. The linkage between temple–school–community enables Buddhist integration to operate systematically: temples as spiritual bases, schools as academic bases, and communities as practice-based arenas. Together, these institutions cultivate youth to become democratic citizens with moral consciousness.

The analysis suggests that with sustained mechanisms such as Buddhist innovation training, joint service projects among schools, temples, and communities, and peaceful dialogue forums for youth a lifelong moral learning system can be built (Wasi, 2014).

In conclusion, Buddhist integration in Ayutthaya is a holistic model that coherently links inner life, moral values, and social participation. It develops not only "good youth" but democratic citizens with compassionate hearts, which is the highest aim of peaceful coexistence in Thai society.

3. The Effects of Buddhist Integration on the Development of Youth Democratic Citizenship

3.1 Dimensions of Behavioral and Conscious Transformation

The integration of Buddhist principles into youth development does not merely emphasize moral instruction but aims at fostering value internalization, which affects both observable behavior and inner consciousness. This process functions through experiential learning such as volunteer service, meditation practice, and dialogic reflection in schools and temples.

When youth continually cultivate the Threefold Purity, right conduct in body, speech, and mind and the Four Brahmavihāras, loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity they evolve from "knowing" to "being." This transformation manifests as greater social responsibility, empathy, and constructive participation in community and civic activities (Payutto, 1998).

3 . 2 Evaluation under the Framework of Democratic Citizenship

The impact of Buddhist integration was analyzed through the conceptual framework of Westheimer and Kahne (2004), which identifies three dimensions of democratic citizenship:

1. Personally Responsible Citizen

Youth demonstrated increased discipline, honesty, and respect for rules and regulations. These behaviors align with the Buddhist virtues of bodily and verbal purity. As a result, young participants became more aware of moral consequences and the importance of ethical restraint in daily life.

2. Participatory Citizen

Through the practice of loving-kindness and compassion, youths developed teamwork, constructive communication, and cooperative decision-making grounded in mutual respect. They learned to express themselves peacefully and to engage in social participation without violence or hostility.

3. Justice-Oriented Citizen

The cultivation of equanimity and wisdom enabled youth to perceive social inequalities with mindfulness and reason, rather than anger or prejudice. This led to the emergence of critical yet ethical citizenship, where youths sought social justice through reasoned and compassionate action (Wasi, 2014).

3.3 Balancing Morality with Freedom

One of the most significant contributions of Buddhist integration is fostering an understanding that democracy is not "freedom without moral boundaries" but "freedom grounded in ethical discipline." Learning Buddhist principles helps youth develop responsible freedom, where liberty is guided by moral awareness and mindfulness (Payutto, 1998).

Meditation practice strengthens self-control, while loving-kindness and equanimity cultivate respect for others' rights. This balance represents the crucial intersection between religious morality and democratic freedom, demonstrating that ethical self-discipline enhances not restricts democratic participation.

3.4 Qualitative Changes Observed among Youth

Observations and in-depth interviews conducted in Buddhist-integrated youth programs in Ayutthaya Province revealed several positive changes:

- Increased patience and ability to listen to others' opinions.
- Greater confidence in expressing ideas constructively while respecting rules and diversity.
- Reduced engagement in risky behavior and use of aggressive language, replaced by rational communication.
- Stronger volunteer spirit and participation in community activities.

- Broader political awareness emphasizing peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

These qualitative outcomes provide empirical evidence that Buddhist integration can effectively cultivate democratic values and behaviors among youth, shaping them into citizens who are both moral and socially responsible (Payutto, 1998; Wasi, 2014; Galtung, 1996).

The author contends that the impact of Buddhist integration on democratic youth development transcends behavioral change, representing instead a profound elevation of civic consciousness across three interrelated levels:

1. Mind Level: Youth develop mindfulness and internalize compassion and justice as intrinsic values.
2. Action Level: Youth act responsibly and engage in community participation consistent with moral conduct.
3. Social Level: Youth become social creators who employ reason instead of violence and ethics instead of prejudice.

In summary, Buddhist integration nurtures balanced citizenship that harmonizes intellectual freedom with moral responsibility, forming the foundation of what can be termed Dhammic Democracy a democracy grounded in Dhamma.

For future youth development, the author proposes a "Threefold Buddhist Synergy" approach consisting of:

1. Mind Cultivation through meditation and mindfulness practice;
2. Moral Conduct Development through volunteerism and value-based learning; and
3. Social Wisdom Development through compassionate dialogue and critical reflection.

If systematically implemented, these processes can transform youth into citizens with democratic hearts and

peaceful minds, establishing the foundation of a harmonious society in accordance with Buddhist principles

4. Synthesizing a Model for Sustainable Democratic Youth Development through Buddhist Integration

4.1 Conceptual Synthesis from the First Three Dimensions

The findings indicate that Buddhist integration functions as a vital mechanism linking inner development with social participation among youth. This connection is achieved through continuous experiential learning and real-life application. The conceptual synthesis draws upon three preceding dimensions:

1 . Theoretical Integration of Buddhism to establishing moral and spiritual foundations through the Threefold Purity and the Four Brahmavihāras (Payutto, 1998; Wasi, 2014).

2 . Contextual Application in Ayutthaya by implementing Buddhist principles in youth development programs coordinated among temples, schools, and communities.

3 . Observed Effects of Integration indicating youth improvement in behavior, civic consciousness, and democratic values.

When combined with Galtung's (1996) concept of *Positive Peace*, these findings form an integrated model aimed at cultivating Ethical Democratic Youth within a peaceful and sustainable social order.

4.2 The Peaceful Society Framework and Youth Development

Galtung's (1996) *Positive Peace* theory asserts that a peaceful society is not merely the absence of violence but consists of two complementary dimensions:

1. Structural Justice, fairness in social opportunities, inclusive participation, and equitable access to public resources.

2. Harmonious Social Relations, coexistence grounded in mutual respect, dignity, and cooperation for the common good.

Applied within a Buddhist framework, a peaceful society begins with inner tranquility cultivated through meditation (cittabhāvanā), extends to relational harmony through the Four Brahmavihāras, and culminates in social peace achieved through constructive civic participation.

This synthesis leads to what can be called Triple Peace:

- Inner Peace – developed through morality and meditation.
- Relational Peace – built through compassionate and mindful communication.
- Social Peace – achieved through cooperation and structural justice.

4.3 Components of the Buddhist-Integrated Development Model

The synthesis yields four core components of the Buddhist Integration Model for Sustainable Democratic Youth Development:

1. Moral Foundation: Rooted in the Threefold Purity and Four Brahmavihāras, this foundation nurtures morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā). As Payutto (1998) stated, "Morality is the fence; wisdom is the light of democracy."

2. Learning Process: Employing participatory learning and contemplative education, enabling youth to think critically, reflect deeply, and exchange views equitably.

3. Socialization Mechanism: Integrating the three key institutions temple, school, and community into a "network of moral learning," fostering behavioral cultivation through cooperation.

4. Civic Outcome: The emergence of Ethical Democratic Youth characterized by responsibility, respect for others, and peaceful participation in society.

4.4 The Dhammic Democratic Youth Model

In the context of Ayutthaya Province, youth development through Buddhist integration can be synthesized into the Dhammic Democratic Youth Model, as summarized below:

Level of Development	Buddhist Mechanism	Youth Outcomes
1. Inner Development (Mind)	Threefold Purity, Fourfold Mental Development (bhāvanā 4)	Mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-discipline.
2. Relational Development (Community Level)	Four Brahmavihāras	Compassion, empathy, respect, and active listening.
3. Social Development (Public Level)	Four Iddhipāda and volunteerism	Social participation, public service, and pursuit of justice.

Overall Outcome: The formation of morally conscious democratic citizens, forming the foundation of a sustainable and peaceful society.

In conclusion, the Buddhist-integrated model for democratic youth development is not merely an idealistic framework but a holistic and applicable process suitable for Thai society particularly Ayutthaya Province, which possesses rich religious and cultural capital. By integrating Buddhist doctrines such as the Threefold Purity and Four Brahmavihāras, youth are grounded in inner stability and ethical mindfulness. When coupled with Political Socialization Theory and Social Learning Theory, moral values are transformed into democratic behaviors. Meanwhile, the Positive Peace framework ensures that this model aims not only to create "good individuals" but to foster "good individuals who coexist peacefully."

The author concludes that Buddhist integration represents a form of "spiritual public policy mechanism" capable of being adapted across provinces to cultivate a new generation of youth who embody moral consciousness, critical thinking, and democratic coexistence. Such development nurtures citizens with democratic hearts and peaceful minds, reinforcing the foundation of a sustainable and harmonious society.

Conclusion

The study found that Buddhist integration serves as a comprehensive framework connecting inner moral cultivation with social participation among youth. The research synthesized four major dimensions conceptual foundation, local application, observed outcomes, and model formulation demonstrating how Buddhist teachings can systematically enhance democratic citizenship and social harmony.

1. Theoretical Foundation: The integration of the Threefold Purity (right bodily, verbal, and mental conduct) and the Four Brahmavihāras (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity) provides moral and spiritual foundations for youth development. These doctrines promote both ethical discipline and relational harmony core attributes of democratic citizenship.

2. Local Application in Ayutthaya: Ayutthaya's temples, schools, and communities were found to form a dynamic triad for moral learning. Buddhist principles were applied through participatory learning, service activities, and mindfulness training. This collaboration fostered social responsibility, compassion, and ethical communication transforming traditional religious institutions into networks of moral and civic education.

3. Observed Outcomes: The integration process resulted in observable behavioral and attitudinal changes among youth, including self-discipline, respect for diversity, reduction of aggressive behaviors, and greater participation in community service. Youth began to demonstrate balanced democratic behaviors exercising freedom with moral awareness and using mindfulness to manage conflicts peacefully.

4. Model Synthesis: The study proposed the Dhammic Democratic Youth Model, comprising three interrelated levels:

- Inner Development: Cultivating mindfulness and self-discipline through the Threefold Purity and Fourfold Mental Development.
- Relational Development: Promoting empathy, respect, and dialogue through the Four Brahmavihāras.
- Social Development: Strengthening civic participation and justice through the Four Iddhipāda and volunteerism.

These dimensions collectively lead to the formation of Ethical Democratic Youth, capable of sustaining a peaceful and just society.

5. Key Conclusion: Buddhist integration is not an abstract moral theory but a practical, holistic approach that can be adapted as a *spiritual public policy mechanism* to foster moral citizenship nationwide. It transforms youth from passive learners into active, mindful citizens embodying the principles of Dhammic Democracy, where freedom and morality coexist harmoniously.

In essence, the research concludes that the integration of Buddhist ethics with civic education strengthens both personal virtue and collective peace, offering a sustainable model for nurturing democratic youth and building a harmonious Thai society grounded in wisdom and compassion.

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Buddhism and Peace: Buddhist Communication to Reduce Violence in Society

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study Buddhist methods to determine the manner of expression towards violence is communicated. The study uses methods from research papers and academic articles to reflect, analyze, and analyze current situations. The study found that Buddhism has principles and practices that are mechanisms to show attitude (mindfulness) towards violent behaviors by using the concept of Buddhist communication methods as shown in the Abhaya Rajakumara Sutta, reducing bias from fear, anger, liking, and using the principles of "morality-concentration-wisdom" as a filter for liking and disliking, anger, not being angry, seeking benefits and leading to not seeking benefits, which are causes leading to violence, war and killing each other.

Keywords: Buddhist Communication Methods for Peace, Communication, Nonviolence

Introduction

War, violence, and political, social, economic, and cultural competition are considered violence according to Buddhism. The basis of anger, hatred, and dislike is the idea, including the issue of conflict that is based on the "competition" for political, economic, social, and cultural benefits, which has developed into a confrontation in order to obtain those benefits, using methods, techniques, tricks, through communication, negotiation, strategy, or using military and international political conditions to obtain what is desired or that benefit for oneself, agencies, organizations, and nation-states, according to the goals and objectives of each agency. But in another sense, in obtaining it, it is the creation of competitors, conflicting parties, or political, economic, social, and cultural competition to create results or outcomes from the mechanisms of practice, both in terms of the masses, acceptance, and benefits that should be obtained in the form of property, as we have heard in the phrase "capital groups/interest groups/nationalist groups/ethnicism/religiousism/nationalism". Therefore, in this study, we will study the phenomenon that leads to the result, which is the creation of a rhetoric of hatred, which has become a conflict, violence, and confrontation in politics, economics, society, culture, and international politics. From the Buddhist foundation through the principle of wisdom, jealousy (what should be abandoned), prejudice, bias (what should be abandoned), using the method of resolving to prevent violence from words by using Buddhist communication methods (should be done), the principle of Kalama Sutta, the criteria for considering receiving information intelligently (should be done), and creating balance through knowledge (equal wisdom), balanced understanding (equal views), and leading to correct and appropriate practice according to the rules, laws, and

common morality (equal precepts), which will be studied and analyzed in sequence.

2. The Concept of "Jealousy" (Genius) of Benefits Leads to Violence. The concept of benefits or jealousy of personal, organizational, state, and national interests has been an ongoing event since the past. (1) As the sutra says that one side benefits, the other side also loses, both in terms of economics and allocation of benefits. When one side loses and sees competitors as enemies, it finds ways to damage the other side, loses opportunities, loses reputation, causes conflict, and even destruction, etc. (2) The beginning and end of wars in the history of mankind are the struggle to obtain what is called benefits in the name of the state or organization. The results are territories or benefits. (3) Benefits are about management, the acquisition of power, positions, titles, and ranks, and in the struggle, it requires a mechanism that one can control and determine. Systematic movement has its own power. In this chapter, the concept of "jealousy-genius" will be used as a framework to reflect the facts. 1. Conflict over boundaries and land (Machchariya Avas) is a war, a conflict related to the state, nation, and boundaries, such as the case of King Pasenadi Kosala fighting a war with King Ajātasattu. The result was that King Pasenadi lost the war and went back to sleep, haunted by nightmares about his defeat all the time. This is the origin of the Buddha's saying, "The victor creates enmity, the loser sleeps in suffering" (MCU Tipitaka (Thai) 15/125/146-148; Sang.S. 15/126/148-149; Sang.S.O. 1/124-125/146-147; Sang.S.Tī. 1/125-126/198 ; Phra Maha Hansa Thammahaso, 2014: 29-54). The Iran-Iraq war during the 1980-1988 as Murray, Williamson; Woods, Kevin (2014) studied in "The Iran-Iraq War: A Military and Strategic History", this conflict lasted for 7 years, 10 months and 1 day, or the international confrontation when Russia annexed Crimea as

part of its country in the "Crimean Crisis" (Political status of Crimea), leading to confrontation and measures to boycott Russia, which became a crisis in the Balkan Peninsula, as shown in the work of Hagendoorn, A.; Linssen, H.; Tumanov, S. V. (2001) in "Intergroup Relations in States of the former Soviet Union: The Perception of Russians", including the dispute over Jerusalem between Israel and the Arab nations. And the conflict between Israel and Palestine (Israeli–Palestinian conflict) regarding the borders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (West Bank, Gaza Strip) as appeared in the work of Kurtzer, Daniel; Lasensky, Scott; Organization (2008) on Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East. Despite attempts at peace negotiations, the outcome has not been as expected, which is peace. Therefore, everything that has been mentioned has occurred under the concept of jealousy over territory or borders, habitation (Masiya Awat) that has occurred in the history of mankind.

2. Conflict on economic interests (brilliance), the struggle for personal, organizational, state, national and natural resources benefits that will be for the benefit of the state, the establishment of tariff walls, trade barriers, grouping for various benefits such as the European Economic Community, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Arab League, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), G7 (Group of Seven), ASEAN+3, etc. All of these groups have the idea of driving the economy with the concept of trade barriers, tariff walls, the use of trade pressure, investment, etc. Therefore, confrontation, conflict and competition in this world are based on the idea of state benefits as it appears in modern wars where we will find conflicts over oil. Natural gas sources, borders, trade, etc., such as the work of Chonlada Satchanit (2009: 125-134) on "NTBs Measures; Key Trade Barriers for Thai Exporters

– Non Tariff Barrers (NTBs): Key Trade Barriers for Thai Exports" which provides the concept of trade competition as follows: "...The establishment of a free trade zone (FTA) that many countries are now paying more attention to and are increasingly negotiating with has resulted in tariff barriers that countries have erected to restrict imports tending to decrease, stimulating the expansion of borderless trade. However, exporting goods to trading partners still has to face other forms of trade barriers, whether it is trade that uses technical issues as an excuse, such as setting product standards, or trade barriers that use issues related to consumer protection, environmental conservation, social responsibility, etc. as an excuse to reduce imports from foreign countries. These non tariff trade measures tend to be increasingly used in the world trade market. The measures that trading partners use against Thai exporters will be found to include both broad measures that are classified into individual measures and in-depth measures that are classified into groups of products. Therefore, it is very important for exporters to study information and follow news about new forms of trade barriers from trading partners regularly in order to be able to adjust their strategies in doing international business in a timely manner...." Therefore, various measures are aimed at economic benefits, such as trade barriers, which can be divided into two major measures: tariff measures (Tariff Barrlers) and non-tariff measures (Non-tariff Barrlers) or any other matter that is due to economic (intelligent) concerns, benefits or benefits are important.

3. Conflict on ethnicity, race (Kulmachariya) Ethnicity that is related to the social structure in the dimension of the world has become a problem. Severe conflicts, in part, are caused by different beliefs in each ethnicity, such as the case of the war for water among

relatives during the time of the Buddha, which was against the background of ethnic discrimination (Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya, 2 5 4 3 : Khuddakanikayakatha Dhammapada, Volume 1, Part 2, Part 3, page 363), the Lord Buddha and his role in intercepting the army of Vidhudabha in the genocide of the Sakya clan (Khu.Su. (Pali) 25/47/25; Kh.Su. (Thai) 25/47/41; Kh.Ap. (Thai) 32/87/577, Phra Maha Harsa Thammahaso, 2557), or conflicts regarding ethnic groups, beliefs, and religions in the southern part of the country, in the Philippines, and the Rohingya in Myanmar. As Yegar, Moshe (2002) studied, "Between integration and secession: The Muslim communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar" or the Rwandan genocide, which was a massacre of Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups in Rwanda by members of the majority government, who were mostly Hutu, during the 100-day event from April 7 to mid-July 1994, an estimated 501,000 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed, which was 70% of the Tutsi and 20% of the total population of Rwanda. As shown in Mamdani, Mahmood's (2002) study, "When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda", including Iraqi violence against Kurds in Iraq, from the information that "… the Kurds have always been a thorn in the side of Turkey and Iraq. The Kurds in northern Iraq are trying to demand independence by separating from Iraq. The same is true in Turkey. When the Kurds rebel and rise up, they are severely suppressed in both Turkey and Iraq..." (Kowit Wongsurawat, 2016) or in the work of G.S. Harris. (1977) on "Ethnic Conflict and the Kurds", which also provides similar information that conflicts over ethnicity, language, religion and beliefs are the basis of differences and lead to conflicts on this issue as well.

4. Conflict in social class, caste (Vannamachariya) In the case of the conflict that occurred during the time of the Buddha, which was a social gap during that period through the caste system (class), gaps and differences in society and social class, the fact that the Lord Buddha became a monk was, in one sense, a rejection of the caste system and creating equality in the Sangha community as seen, including the Lord Buddha solving the family problems between King Pasenadi, Vasabha Khattiya, and Vidupha under the concept of "Father's blood is more important than mother's blood" until it became forgiveness, based on the difference in social caste (Phra Palat Rapin Phutthisaro, 2011) , including jealousy, stinginess, discrimination, or conflict in the caste system of thought, which still appears until the present, as shown in the information that Bowon Thosrikaew (2016) The modern Indian caste war, accepting a lower class in order to survive, gave information that "...The problem of caste division in India flared up again when the Jat people in the northern state of Haryana, near New Delhi, rioted last week, killing 19 people and injuring hundreds. In addition to blocking roads and railway tracks, protesters also destroyed the Munak canal, which supplies 60% of the capital's water supply, leaving more than 10 million people, or about three-quarters of New Delhi's population, without water. The caste system was created when the Aryans invaded and waged war against the indigenous people who originally lived in India, called the Milakshas (or Dassayus or Dravids) in ancient times. When the Aryans won the war, they used Brahmanism as a tool to divide the caste into four castes to make it easier to govern, believing that each caste was created from a different part of Brahma and had a different function." This idea comes from the fact that the caste system in India is still strong and influential even though society has changed since the time of the Buddha. However, the idea of caste protection

and social class still exists, as has been studied by some people, such as "The Caste System: Problems and Solutions from the Perspectives of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar" (Somwang Kaewsuphong, 2016: 121-139), the existence of the caste system in Indian society (Somwang Kaewsuphong, 2018: 115-134), or in the work of Achaphurit Nomnian (2017: 31-60) on "Social Concepts of Careers from the Perspective of Caste in Hinduism". Therefore, the idea of caste or the concern for caste reflects social inequality, as cites a case study from the data of the CS Global Wealth Report 2018 by Credit Suisse, a Swiss private bank and wealth management leader, which released data in October 2018, stating that Thailand has become the country with the highest inequality in the world. When counting the wealth rankings, Thailand was ranked 3rd in a survey two years ago, but has now surpassed Russia and India in inequality and is now number 1 behind both countries (Thai Rath print edition: online: 24 December 2018). Therefore, the problem of inequality among members of society is still a problem for the world community, especially Thailand with the statistics that appear at present. 5. Conflict in theory, principle, concept, practice (Dhammachariya) Conflict in belief, principle, concept, right or wrong, yes or no, true or false, such as conflict in politics, government, democratic constitution, election, no election, dictatorship, democracy, liberalism, true Buddhism, false Buddhism, reformed Dharma. These are conflicts in concept and practice as they appeared during the time of the Buddha until they led to the Sangha Council and became sects (Suraphot Thawisak, 2545: 82-92). For example, in Thailand, Thammayut Nikaya (Srisuphorn Chuangsakul, 2 5 6 2 : 5 4- 81), Santi Asoke (Chandra Hengsombun, 2556), Dhammakaya (Tree Boonchuea, 2017), yellow-red shirts (Wanwiphan Manachotiphong, 2557) , democracy and different beliefs in

democracy (Naraphat Saothongthong, 2015: 89-95), such as the mechanism for amending the constitution, election, no election, illegal coup d'état, or corruption in power. These lead to confrontation with conflicts, including the use of violence as a tool. “Media (not) killing: Cultural violence in the digital age” (Wilaiwan Chongwilaikasem, 2017) transmits violence as ideas and actions. Therefore, the idea of jealousy over beliefs, principles, ideas, and truths is a set of ideas, one reason that leads to conflicts and violence against each other under the concept of “Dhammachariya”. The idea of jealousy over beliefs, ideas, race, family, and ethnicity leads to behaviors and actions that are, on the one hand, to preserve, on the other hand, to protect, on the other hand, to confirm one’s own ideals and ideas. Therefore, conflicts over oil, borders, territories, conflicts over mineral resources, natural gas, and in these conflicts that are currently occurring, some can be resolved, some have not yet been concluded, some have become violent from solving the problems themselves, and the resulting impacts have continued. All of this occurs under the concept of jealousy (chariya).

3. The Concept of “Bias”, Bias Leading to the Trap of using Violence In Buddhism, there is a principle of bias, which is a principle that should be abandoned or should not be allowed to occur. Bias means not, should not reach, and should not be practiced. In Buddhism, which has the Lord Buddha as a prophet, it is used to mean bias. There are 4: chanda-gīti, dosa-gīti, bhaya-gīti, and moha-gīti. It is the dharma of adults that should be adhered to. As for practitioners, it can be used to consider all things. We see that we are distorted from the truth of all things. It is because of the 4 biases towards all things. Which is specific to explaining harmful speech. This principle can be applied. The goal is to reduce or not use these practices. The result is

to reduce conflict, violence, and harmful speech. Which can be classified as follows:

1. Love and satisfaction (chanda-gīti - should be abandoned) means choosing to communicate, using harmful speech based on bias because of liking, pleasing the same group, the same ethnicity, the same race, the same religion, and having international interests. When violent conflict occurs, it leads to the creation of harmful speech through a set of thoughts that may not be true, useless, and not the truth. It is detrimental to the other party, but oneself, one's own group, and one's own group benefit from it. Using communication through likes and dislikes as a basis in Buddhism is something that should be reduced or not allowed to happen.

2. Anger, hatred (tosakati-should be abandoned) means choosing to communicate, using abusive words based on bias because of anger or hatred. Anger leads to dislike, dissatisfaction, and dislike, leading to the creation of rhetoric to reduce credibility or seeking ways to create injustice, such as using political issues to counter the other party to reduce injustice. Therefore, the idea of running after the uncle or creating international political rhetoric causes the reduction of goodness, beauty, and beliefs of each person in terms of probability.

3. Bias due to delusion (mohakati-should be abandoned) or bias due to ignorance means choosing to communicate, using abusive words based on misunderstanding, receiving insufficient information, distortion, or choosing to believe only what one likes, is satisfied with, or wants, as seen in the abusive words of "buffalo-yellow/red" and "yellow shirts", which these abusive words arise on the basis of

delusion, which is choosing to believe information based on one's own satisfaction as the main factor. It is considered a bias that is mainly based on one's own information or needs, which is related to insufficient information, insufficient information presented by each side to lead to wise decision-making, etc.

4. Fear of potential dangers (prejudice - should be abandoned) means choosing to communicate based on fear, based on fear as a basis of thought, fear of being arrested, fear of breaking the law, fear of the other party with more people coming to harm, not telling the truth because of fear of influential people, or fear that if one speaks, one's side will lose benefits, or if one speaks, the other party will gain benefits. The fear of that environment causes miscommunication, including the creation of rhetoric, abusive language to cause the other party to lose benefits or reduce the legitimacy of the other party, which leads to the creation of rhetoric or beliefs, which are reasons for using violence, based on fear, as seen in both domestic and international political situations. As there is research that has studied bias and used reduction or control with the aim of improving the quality of community members, society, for coexistence with the aim of "peace", as shown in the work of Phuticha Chanthakhun, Seri Chatcham, Witawat Penphu (2019: 189-196) in the topic "Attention Bias: "What I Believe to Be True", which presented the results of the study that attention bias is related to the tendency of people to pay attention to something. But at the same time, they will ignore other things around them. The impact of this attention bias is not only what people perceive in the environment. But also includes the influence on the decision-making process. From past

studies, it was found that there are many studies that show the threat of attention bias, especially in people with mood and anxiety disorders. In this article, the author reviews articles, various research on attention bias. By presenting the meaning, concept, characteristics, evaluation, and training methods to reduce attention bias to help people with mood disorders develop their cognitive processes leading to better decision-making processes. Or in the work of Atsawin Netphokaew (2014: 19-32) in the research on "Social Media Innovation and Community Bias" presents the results of a study that: "...New media created by digital technology helps increase efficiency in work and communication by integrating mass communication, computers, and telecommunications. Therefore, the communication landscape in the information society era has changed significantly. However, new media that has been developed into online social networks also makes people build up walls to receive information because they select only things that reinforce their old beliefs, which may further foster extremist ideas. Importantly, they are also spread rapidly. Social media gathers groups of friends until they become a new public that has emerged from every step of life. From the past to the present, it is a "public self" of each individual, numbering hundreds or thousands or more. This online social network originates from individual choices, leading to the creation of a "biased community" in which most friends or members share the same opinion, to the point of blocking and rejecting different ideas, as well as leading to hatred, the use of hate speech, and conflict and division. If social media is to be a truly creative innovation,

people should learn and be open-minded to receive more diverse information and support and promote peaceful dialogue by turning to create a knowledge-rich space through communication innovation..." Including in the work of Chalat Pratuangratana (2013: 115-122) in the article "Misleading Perceptions and Biased Thoughts in Mediation: How to Manage Them?" which focuses on methods to understand misleading perceptions and cognitive biases that can occur in mediation because humans go through different processes of shaping their thoughts and beliefs. Misleading perceptions and biased thoughts result in unsuccessful mediation or cause delays in the negotiation process. Therefore, how should we deal with misleading perceptions and thoughts in order to create correct and mutual understanding and avoid mistakes? The approaches that can be used are to change the perspective (Reframing) to be positive and use good communication by asking clear questions, listening attentively and empathizing. Or in the research on "The Effects of Using Bias Reduction Activities Based on the Concept of Multicultural Studies on Students' Attitudes and Understanding of Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Diversity in the ASEAN Community" High school level" (Surachai Nantaburom, Walai Isarangkun Na Ayutthaya, 2015: 139-154) who conducted a study to find out the bias that might occur by using the method (1) comparing the understanding of ethnic diversity, religion and culture in the ASEAN community before and after teaching (2) including studying the change in the understanding of ethnic diversity, religion and culture in the ASEAN community of students. In the issue of the study, it is seen that bias is a complement that

causes hatred. Therefore, reducing bias is the final goal to reduce violence or the idea that will create violence. By looking at the wrong perception and biased thinking in negotiation and mediation: How to manage it? Negotiation and mediation Because humans go through the process of molding different thoughts and beliefs, wrong perception and biased thinking may result in negotiation and mediation that may not be successful or cause delays in the negotiation process. Therefore, how should we deal with perception and biased thinking in order to create correct and mutual understanding and not make mistakes? From the overall picture, it reflects that bias is something that should be abandoned or leaders, media or members of society should be careful. When communicating or creating any rhetoric or set of beliefs, they must be careful. Or consider carefully to prevent the cause from bias (bias, mutual bias, which should be avoided). In addition, there is a way to solve or prevent by using the principle called "criteria for judging by wisdom" called "Kalama Sutta" [Ong. Tuk. (Thai) 20/60-66/225-263, Kalama is the name of the kings of Kesaputtanikama (Ong. Tik. A. 2/66/202)] in the meaning is to use the intelligence of the recipient of information sufficiently, in all aspects, which is equal to Buddhism accepting the criteria for intellectual differences of each person in each person and at the same time accepting systematic differences by receiving information must be sufficient, both using "criteria" through "oneself" in both knowledge, experience and sufficient advice, then it will lead to the perception, consumption of information, which will result in peace and coolness. It will also create peace in both perception, consumption and

consumption. Because otherwise, it will become stained with false information such as "harmful speech" that is created and sent as a message and the message itself, which affects the facts, reality as it appears at present.

4. The Desire that goes beyond the “Boundaries” of Politics, Economy, Society, and Culture, Leading to Hatred, Violence, and War. From studying the information that appears, it will create concepts or ideas that appear in the public sphere and lead to the creation of beliefs in politics, economy, society, and culture.

1.The desire for benefits, leading to the creation of violence through communication. During the time of the Buddha, the prosperity of Buddhism affected other religious groups because they were the same mass base, meaning competing for customers. Using the death of Mrs. Suntaree as a tool to slander and defame from the lost benefits of the opposite religious group, therefore, there was a thought to reclaim those benefits, leading to the thought of eliminating them with “tricks”, throwing the corpse to slander, and blaming “who killed”, as in the case of the death and corpse at the Ratchaprasong rally in Thai Service between April 10-May 2010. Therefore, death and killing have the meaning of benefits and losses. Simply put, the corpse has the meaning of benefits. Death has the benefit of “deterioration”, hatred for the beliefs of the other party. Benefits in power and profits make people invest in competing to obtain “Power-benefit” or the struggle for benefits in politics, economy, territory, without limiting the methods, even causing people to “die”, such as the case of the conflict over the death of the military leader in Iran, which led to conflict and confrontation,

or the case in the Sutta of Sundari Sutta, “So he hired a gangster to kill her and hid her in the moat around the Jetavana.” [Compare from the Sutta Pitaka, Khuddaka Nikaya, Udana [4. Meghiya Vagga] 8. Sundari Sutta (Thai) 25/38/246-250]

2. Greed for benefits, power means seeking benefits and power without limiting the methods, creating events to use events as bargaining chips, using lies to reduce the truth, death is made a condition, to be a tool for the other party, to threaten, intimidate, including ending the gains of the other party. Therefore, we see death being raised as a political issue, reducing the credibility of the other party, death is made a tool to end the role or behavior, the actions of the other party. Death or violence is therefore the beginning of the problem, and there is no sign of it ending. Or solve the problem permanently, but it will be a "sin" for the benefit, power that is recorded as a historical fact.

3. The use of false information, leading to hatred through false information, specifically death is a fabricated situation, so it is a part of both true and false construction to be a joint answer to the incident. How is it possible to kill from somewhere else and then carry the body here? It sounds like an expression used such as the case of Wat Pathum. “...Wat Pathum Wanaram Ratchaworawihan, or popularly known as Wat Pathum, is a very interesting temple. It is an old temple in the middle of the capital, built during the reign of King Rama IV. It is a Thammayut temple, a third-class royal temple. During the dispersal of the protest at Ratchaprasong Intersection in 2010, where it is said that 99 people were shot dead, Wat Pathum was used as a "sanctuary" to take the injured into

shelter. On May 19, 2010, 6 people were shot dead in the temple. Later in 2013, the court stated that all 6 died from being shot with high-velocity bullets from soldiers stationed on the BTS skytrain tracks between Phra Ram 1 Road and in front of Wat Pathum. Wat Pathum is a temple that does not hold funerals and does not have a crematorium…" (Religious Studies, Dr. Sinchai Chaowacharoenrat, online, retrieved 18 August 2019) The issue of slander is created through public communication, publicity, as if the other party is the victim, including the tragic case of the death of yellow shirts and red shirts during the political protests in Thailand. "On May 22, 2010, 98 people were killed and 1,978 were injured. Most recently, on May 22, 2014, General Prayut Chan-o-cha declared martial law and the military staged a coup, causing severe economic damage of more than 750 billion baht. The baht dropped 4.6 percent, the lowest in three years. The stock market index dropped 9.1 percent. Tourism dropped 60 percent. Foreign investors withdrew 5.6 billion US dollars in protest." (Amnuay Sukhi, 2017: 9-11) The issues and information mentioned were used as tools for political counterattack (Ekapolnat Nattapattanan, 2015: 85-128). Death in political situations in October 1973 and 1975 were all thought of as countering the other party, with the results being "win-lose." Who gained or lost was another matter. For example, the deaths in China's Cultural Revolution (Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, Michael Schoenhals, 1996), the deaths in the genocide in Cambodia (Genocide in Cambodia, 1975-1979, David P. Chandler, 1991), and the genocide in Rwanda (Genocide in Rawanda, 7 April – 15 July 1994/ Longman, Timothy, 2010) were all

facts. However, in another sense, they were tools for public communication to create legitimacy for the other party. Therefore, the death of Suntaree was a fact that the death was designed to die in a situation of competition and the struggle for benefits on behalf of a rival organization. But on the other hand, it is used as a tool by the other party to create legitimacy and delegitimize the other party at the same time.

4. Creating false information leading to hate speech The concept of conspiracy theory, which implies collusion, helping each other, or creating a situation together, "... a system of thinking of people or groups of people who link events or stories together for a purpose to give benefits, disadvantages, benefits, or damage to individuals or groups of people, with only some facts or some reasons to support both in the context of society, culture, religion, and politics..." (Chalermpol Phommuk, 2018) Such as the case of the incident "... stories in the past related to conspiracy theories in foreign countries, such as astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong in the Apollo program who stepped on the moon in 1968 were hoaxes, Hitler and Elvis Presley were not dead but were taken into space by aliens, the mystery of the assassination of the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, the youngest person in the United States, on November 22, 1963, the owner of the phrase "Ask not what the country can give you. But ask yourself what you have done for your country" or the world may end soon because a large meteorite will enter our orbit..." and there is statistical data that "... there are political science researchers from the University of Miami led by Joseph E. Uscinski and Joseph M. Parent who wrote the book American Conspiracy Theories in

2014 who surveyed Americans and found that 3 out of 4 people used to believe that "Obama" was not American and the 9/11 incident, 23% of people who graduated with a bachelor's degree believed in such things...." (Chalermpol Phlomuk, 2018) All of the above are reflections of the truth that has been created. As for what is false or true, the truth will be confirmed by the truth. Therefore, in summary, conflicting interests cause competition, seizing benefits through dishonest means, using other people's lives to create conditions for "death". In the case of the United States and Iran using the death of the Iranian military leader to create conditions with the goal of their own benefits, the result is violence, death and continuous violence with various interests as a backdrop, including creating slanderous words to harm each other. Until it became the hatred between the two worlds as seen today. 5. Buddhist communication methods to prevent violence and manage information violence. The event, which is a concept and the Buddha's words, occurred through teaching in the form of a simile to Prince Abhaya, as evidenced in the Abhaya Rajakumara Sutta, the story of Prince Abhaya Rajakumara, Abhaya Rajakumara Sutta, Tripitaka, Volume 13, Majjhima Nikaya, Majjhima Pannasaka, which has content related to the event when Prince Abhaya debated with the Buddha and asked which message to communicate, how, and when, which the Buddha answered until Prince Abhaya believed in Buddhism. The answer to the Buddha's question is a Buddhist method that has been explained and interpreted as a Buddhist method of communication of the Buddha and Buddhism since the time of the Buddha and can be interpreted in the present day as

reducing violence and harm, as well as the question and answer that: Table 1 Comparison of concepts appearing in the dialogue between the Buddha and Prince Abhaya way The Buddha's Method of Communication Communication characteristics Expected results from communication 1 Any speech that is not true, not genuine, not beneficial, and not beloved or pleasing to others, do not utter such speech. True/False/Useless/Unpleasant/Not spoken (Not communicated) - Reduce violence - Reduce the use of abusive language 2 Any words that are true, beneficial, and not beloved or pleasing to others, the Tathagata knows the time to say them. True/True/Useful/People don't like it/Choose to speak (Choose to communicate) - Reduce violence - Reduce the use of abusive language -Reduce misunderstandings 3 Any word that is not true, not genuine, not beneficial, and not pleasing to others, the Tathagata does not utter. Not true/not authentic/not useful/people like it/not satisfactory/not speaking (not communicating) 4 The Tathagata knows the right time to say words that are true, beneficial, and pleasing to others. This is because the Tathagata has compassion for all beings." True/true/useful/people like it/choose what to say (choose how to communicate/consider how to present carefully) -Reduce violence -Reduce the use of abusive language -Reduce confrontation/violence -Reduce violence -Reduce the use of abusive language -Reduce misunderstanding -Build friendship -Peace in coexistence Source: the Abhaya Sutta, Prince Abhaya, Tipitaka, Volume 13, Sutta Pitaka, Volume 5, Majjhimanikaya, Majjhimapannasaka. From the Buddha's words above, it can be divided into 4 points and 2 issues, divided

into 2 approaches to Buddhist communication: (1) not communicating at all or not communicating further, repeating it, repeating it when it has been verified that it is not true and is not useful (2) choosing to communicate or speak according to the occasion and situation, which of the 4 methods and 2 main approaches can be divided into details as follows: 1. The first method is to choose to communicate. It means to use the criteria for careful judgment, so it is presented. That is, choosing the media, speaking, telling, or repeating information to confirm. It must be beneficial, true. The key is to choose to communicate correctly according to the time and era. Then it will be considered correct communication. In summary, speaking words that are true and beneficial, even if they are not loved or liked, is still spoken. It only requires the appropriate time and compassion as the main principle. The criteria for judgment in choosing to communicate must be the truth, the true truth, the pure truth without benefits or hidden meanings. When presented, people are satisfied, like it, and agree, including being beneficial in terms of individuals, groups, and benefits as a whole. Buddhist criteria for communication When the occasion and situation are appropriate, choose to speak or communicate according to the criteria in point 1. Choose to communicate with the expectation of knowledge, understanding, and not causing conflict. 2. The second method is to choose not to communicate. This means using criteria for diagnosis by looking at the message itself, whether it is true or not, whether it is partially true, or whether it is a truth with hidden benefits. Although most people like it or not, the important thing is to focus on benefits as the main factor in

communication. When it does not correspond to these criteria, the Buddhist method is not to present, not to disseminate, not to communicate, which will lead to misunderstanding or deviation from the truth, which will result in more harm than good. Therefore, we should abstain, abstain, or not to produce results from that communication. Why speaking the truth and having benefits requires knowing the time and having compassion? On this point, it is not difficult to see, just ask yourself if you want to listen to something that is not true. The answer you will receive will be along the lines of no. Then ask further, even if it is true but not beneficial, do you want to listen? The answer will be the same as no., and try asking the last question, even if it is true and beneficial, if the speaker brings it up at a time when you do not want to listen and speaks in a contemptuous manner, will you listen? The answer will be along the lines of no. When you do not want to listen and the speaker still wants to talk to you, how will you feel? The answer you will receive will inevitably be bored, annoyed, and irritated, which are characteristics of having anger in the end. When it is like this, it can be inferred that words that are not true or true but not beneficial, coupled with the speaker not having compassion in speaking, will probably receive negative responses from the listeners. In some cases, if you still say things that the listeners are bored with and annoyed with frequently, you may receive insults or sarcasm from the listeners in response. Furthermore, if the untrue words cause damage to someone, frequently and more severely, to the point of exceeding the limit of tolerance, the speaker may be harmed by speaking in this manner, which is called oral danger or danger from speaking. In the current

situation, the people who should be most careful about speaking in Thai society are politicians and listeners who choose a political side. They should adhere to the above-mentioned speaking guidelines and not speak for their own personal benefit and that of the party they belong to. Because if they insist on speaking like a poem on every matter, or even on some matters, but some matters are important and make others unhappy, it can be dangerous for both themselves and the party they belong to. It is true that in political speeches, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is not, not to mention whether it is true or not, which is harder to say that it is beneficial from words in political speeches that aim to counter competitors. and aim to persuade the people to believe and choose themselves. It is difficult for politicians to have time to think and ponder reasons for what should and should not be said. Therefore, politicians or even supporters of politicians who stand on different sides will refrain from speaking in a manner that criticizes others. When there is criticism, they cannot escape a verbal clash and defeating each other with words, which is a source of increasing division. And when it is like this, can a reconciliation policy really happen? Figure 2 Interpretation of Buddhist communication methods from the conversation between the Buddha and Prince Abhaya Source: the Abhaya Rajakumara Sutta, the story of Prince Abhaya, Tripitaka, Volume 13, Sutta Pitaka, Volume 5, Majjhima Nikaya, Majjhima Pannāsaka. 6. Buddhist Methods of Applying "Models" use Buddhist Communication Methods to Reduce Violence. The application of "helpers" to the truth (or untruth) is important. Reading, listening, and asking

questions comprehensively until you have enough information can help filter out both true and false information. Using criteria for judging through information allows us to see tangible truth more systematically, including trying to create shared knowledge called “civil society”, which will be truly beneficial, creating a driving force or leading to systematic movement. The model used in the time of the Buddha can be applied to screen media and use criteria systematically based on the principle of being media and media receivers, which is:

1. Truth means that media must create truth, insist on truth. In order to create media, produce media, and communicate publicly, the most important thing is truth. It must be truth in tangible aspects and create benefits both for individuals and the public. As for media consumers, they should use their intelligence to ponder a lot, systematically, and look at the benefits, advantages, and disadvantages comprehensively enough to consume media according to the aforementioned set of truths before believing and practicing. Because the Buddhist perspective does not only look at benefits, but also focuses on the virtues that will reach the goal. As the Buddha said in the Buddha's words in what he will teach that "must be good, useful, liked by people and be beneficial to the religious goals", whenever Buddhists will do anything or communicate anything, Buddhists must receive information and communicate information carefully, such as using the truth, confirming that truth (Satcha) as the real truth or using the truth to fight against untruth. It is a Buddhist method that was created during the time of the Buddha, ready to fight with the method "People who like to speak untruth or people who do evil and say "I didn't do it" will all go to hell" (MCU Tipitaka (Thai) 25/38/246-250). In Buddhism, we use a strategy to stop violence from

communication with the real truth (Satcha) as the practice of the Buddha that "the nature of the Tathagata" does not commit sins even in secret. This nature is the evidence that is evident in terms of individuals, just like herbivores do not eat meat. Buddhism uses this nature as a means to protect and maintain the truth. The tangible truth is revealed to the public. From the incident of Suntaree, it can be adapted to use the truth to fight against untruth with determination and strength. We must be patient and confirm the truth to the utmost. Which can be used in all situations, whether in politics, economics, society, or culture, etc.

2. Understanding, being neutral means that the media must communicate the message until the receiver understands the truth clearly, directly, without concealing or hiding it to achieve something. Therefore, communication is beneficial in providing knowledge, creating the truth, which will result in neutral behavior, not leaning towards one side or the other based on correct knowledge and understanding, which ultimately results in peace and tranquility. When the media provides neutral information, the consumer also has a base of thought that can be compared, leading to understanding and establishing a neutral attitude towards receiving that media in a straightforward and neutral manner.

3. Responsibility for the truth means that the media should present anything with the principle of initial responsibility that it is true, correct, good and useful, and therefore present it responsibly in the message presented and the results that will occur, that is, it will not create a crime in thought by providing information that is false or true but not useful, both at the individual and social level, and it will also have an impact on society in general, and it must be passed on to the responsibility and shared sense of the truth of people in society, which is not limited to the media, the

media producers, but also includes all members of society as a whole.

4. Love / Kindness / Friendship The most important thing is that whatever is communicated must come from love, kindness and friendship that will give the truth that is genuine and useful, hoping for the result of correct understanding, pointing out wrong, telling right in things that are useful and creating meaningful movement and being a positive force in life, becoming love and kindness for each other, even though they have different views, different beliefs, but in the end, they are human beings in the same society and nation. Communicating with truth according to the Buddhist communication method, “the criteria for diagnosing communication according to Buddhism” that the Buddha used, which is that he spoke, taught, preached, “communicated” only when the communication was “true, good, useful, pleasing, appropriate for communicating both time and people” [MCU Tipitaka (Thai) 13/83-87/84-90, Abhayarajakumara Sutta] based on love and kindness, the result will be the friendship of living together in the society of humans as a whole. 6. Conclusion Creating correct trust, correct understanding will not be the cause of misunderstanding under the mechanism of bias (should be abandoned) that will lead to misunderstanding, including members who are possessive (intelligent - should be abandoned) in both interests, ethnicity, race, creating balance under correct knowledge and understanding (equal wisdom) until seeing it as correct and just, according to the appropriate path (equal views) and following the rules, laws and social ethics (equal morality), including raising the principles of Kalama Sutta, "10 criteria for judging the truth" in Buddhism to be a tool for seeking the truth with the goal of living together peacefully. The mechanism or cycle that will lead to hatred, creating malicious speech for the purpose

of hatred, violence and/or division will not occur. The concept raised in this study is therefore one of the Buddhist methods in various ways that aim to reduce conflict, reduce violence on the basis of wisdom, understanding correctly, and behaving appropriately and correctly. It is a conclusion to not be the cause of conflicts in terms of economic, political, social and cultural interests. Knowing correctly, knowing clearly, and being able to practice under diversity is the way out of the problem of malicious speech to violence and conflict.

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The Buddhist Social Innovation for Enhancing Elderly Well-being through Circular Textile Waste Management in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a Buddhist Social Innovation that enhances the well-being of the elderly through circular textile waste management in Thailand. The study employs the "Baworn" concept (integration of Home–Temple–School/Government) as the core driving mechanism and applies key Buddhist doctrines such as the Four Iddhipāda (Four Bases of Accomplishment) and the Seven Sappurisa-dhamma (Seven Qualities of the Good Person) to create a sustainable community learning process. A qualitative research design was conducted in Ban Pakhao Community, Ang Thong Province, a model community renowned for its traditional weaving wisdom and creative textile production. The key informants included community leaders, elderly people, local weavers, monks, teachers, and local government officers—a total of 25 participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussions.

The findings revealed that circular textile waste management serves as an effective mechanism for creating new value within the community in terms of economic, environmental, and spiritual dimensions. Particularly,

elderly participants were empowered to utilize their skills, local wisdom, and craftsmanship to transform textile waste into new products such as plaids, tablecloths, tote bags, and daily-use household items. The integration of Buddhist teachings into the activities led to profound mental and emotional transformation among the elderly. They developed a stronger sense of pride, self-worth, and social participation. Meanwhile, community collaboration among multiple sectors emerged through the Baworn network: homes became learning centers, temples became spiritual and moral hubs, schools acted as knowledge transmitters, and local authorities served as support mechanisms. Based on the results, the researcher synthesized the "Buddhist Circular Model," a systemic conceptual framework of Buddhist Social Innovation comprising three interdependent dimensions: Baworn Integration for community mobilization, Circular Textile Process for resource circulation and creative reuse, and Elderly Well-being for holistic physical, social, and spiritual development. These dimensions are interconnected through mutual support and reciprocity in a circular system guided by the principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination). The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of Buddhist Social Innovation and provides a practical model for sustainable community development.

Keywords: Buddhist Social Innovation, Elderly Well-being, Circular Textile Waste Management, Baworn Integration, Circular Economy

Introduction

Thailand is entering a complete aged society, in which the proportion of the elderly population is projected to exceed 30 percent by 2040 (National Statistical Office,

2023). This demographic transformation poses significant challenges to the health, quality of life, and social participation of older adults, particularly in rural communities where many elderly people lack income, creative engagement, and social connection. At the same time, environmental problems arising from textile waste have become increasingly severe. According to the Pollution Control Department (2024), Thailand generates more than 500,000 tons of textile waste annually, over 70 percent of which is discarded without recycling. Therefore, circular textile waste management has become an important issue within the framework of the Circular Economy, aligning with the principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Buddhist teachings provide profound philosophical guidance consistent with these sustainability concepts. The principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination) highlights the interconnectedness of all phenomena, while Majjhimāpaṭipadā (The Middle Way) emphasizes balanced living through moderation and mindfulness. When integrated with the concept of Social Innovation, these Buddhist doctrines form a foundation for what can be termed Buddhist Social Innovation—a transformative approach aimed at fostering positive change at individual, community, and societal levels, grounded in moral consciousness and spiritual wisdom.

The Ban Pakhao Community in Ang Thong Province serves as a model community renowned for its long-standing tradition of handwoven plaid (pha khao ma). However, in recent years, the community has faced a decline in younger generations continuing the craft, reduced income, and increasing textile waste discarded without reuse. Most elderly residents still possess valuable knowledge and

weaving skills but lack a systematic support mechanism. The development of Buddhist Social Innovation thus emerges as a crucial approach to bridge traditional wisdom with modern sustainability concepts, enhancing economic resilience, environmental responsibility, and spiritual well-being simultaneously. The Baworn Model—which integrates Home (Ban), Temple (Wat), and School (Rongrian)—has been proven effective in various community development initiatives. In this research, the model is adapted to establish an interdependent and dynamic system: homes serve as learning and production centers, temples function as spiritual and moral centers, and schools become knowledge transmission hubs. Together, these three institutions create a cyclic system of mutual support that strengthens both community solidarity and individual dignity. Elevating the well-being of the elderly through circular textile waste management is therefore not merely a physical solution to waste problems but a revitalization of the human spirit—enabling the elderly to rediscover their sense of worth, apply their wisdom, and engage meaningfully in the life of the community.

Purpose

1.To study the current conditions, problems, and needs of the elderly in Ban Pakhao Community, Ang Thong Province, regarding textile waste management at both household and community levels.

2. To design a process of Buddhist Social Innovation that integrates Buddhist doctrines, the concept of the Circular Economy, and the Baworn approach (Home–Temple–School) to strengthen participatory learning and collaborative practices within the community.

3. To develop a prototype of the “Buddhist Circular Model” for sustainable circular textile waste management

that can be expanded and adapted for other communities in the future.

Scope of study

-Study Area

The study was conducted in Ban Pakhao Community, Bang Sadet Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, which is a local community well-known for its traditional handwoven textiles and cultural wisdom in fabric production. The area was selected as a prototype for developing a community-based model that integrates Buddhist principles with circular textile waste management.

-Population and Participants

The target participants included 25 key informants comprising community leaders, monks, teachers, local weavers, elderly residents, and representatives from local government agencies. A purposive sampling method was applied to ensure the inclusion of participants who possess direct experience and in-depth understanding of community development, Buddhist practices, and textile production.

-Duration of the Study

Data collection was carried out over a period of eight months, from January to August 2025, during which the researcher participated in community-based activities and observed the circular textile processes at various stages.

-Content Scope

The study focused on the process of managing textile waste at both household and community levels, emphasizing the reuse, redesign, and creative upcycling of leftover fabrics to generate new value. The Buddhist principles of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination) and Iddhipāda (Four Bases of Accomplishment) were integrated as moral and spiritual foundations guiding the development of social innovation in the community.

Expected

-A Model of Buddhist Social Innovation for the Elderly

The research is expected to result in the development of a Buddhist Social Innovation Model that integrates community participation, Buddhist moral principles, and circular textile waste management. The model will serve as a prototype for enhancing the well-being of elderly people through meaningful engagement and sustainable community practices.

-Enhancement of Elderly Well-being

The elderly participants are expected to gain not only economic benefits through the reuse and creative transformation of textile waste, but also mental and spiritual well-being through self-esteem, pride, and renewed social participation. The process aims to reduce loneliness and foster intergenerational connection within the community.

-Reduction of Textile Waste and Environmental Impact

By adopting the principles of Circular Economy, the project will promote fabric reuse, upcycling, and eco-friendly production processes. This is expected to reduce textile waste in the community by more than 40 percent, contributing to environmental sustainability and resource efficiency.

-Community Empowerment through the Baworn Network

The collaboration among Home, Temple, and School (the Baworn approach) is anticipated to strengthen local governance and community resilience. Homes will serve as learning and production bases, temples will function as centers for moral cultivation, and schools will provide platforms for transmitting local wisdom and innovation.

-The Buddhist Circular Model Framework

A conceptual framework called the "Buddhist Circular Model" will be developed, consisting of three interdependent dimensions:

Baworn Integration — the social mechanism for community engagement

Circular Textile Process — the environmental mechanism for material reuse

Elderly Well-being — the human mechanism for spiritual and social balance

These three dimensions are expected to form a cyclical and self-sustaining system inspired by the Buddhist principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination). See Figure 1 for a schematic representation of the model.

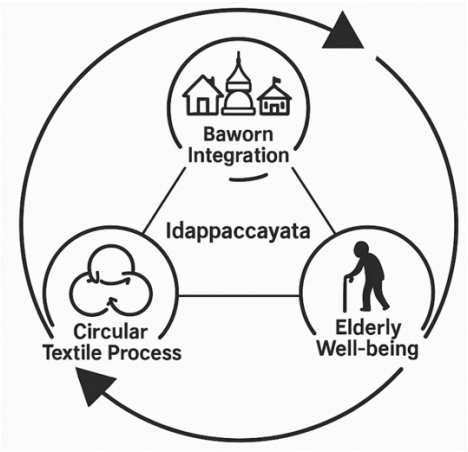


Figure 1. Buddhist Circular Model. The model illustrates three interdependent dimensions — *Baworn Integration*, *Circular Textile Process*, and *Elderly Well-being* — and their cyclical relations guided by the principle of *Idappaccayatā* (interdependent origination). The arrows indicate feedback loops through which community action, material circulation, and individual well-being mutually reinforce one another.

Literature Review

The concept of Buddhist Social Innovation combines Buddhist ethical principles with community-based development and creative problem-solving for social and environmental sustainability. This literature review focuses on four key areas relevant to the present study: (1) Social Innovation, (2) Circular Economy and Textile Waste Management, (3) Elderly Well-being, and (4) Buddhist Principles for Sustainable Development.

- Social Innovation

Mulgan (2006) defined social innovation as a new solution to social problems that is more effective, efficient, and sustainable than existing approaches, while generating value primarily for society rather than private individuals. Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller (2008) emphasized that social innovation occurs through the integration of new ideas, social collaboration, and systemic impact. In Thailand, Buddhist-oriented social innovations have increasingly been recognized as tools for strengthening community resilience. Sasithorn Mongkolchit (2021) found that Buddhist Social Innovation, when combined with local culture and community wisdom, fosters long-term development through compassion (metta), altruism (karuna), and self-reliance (attanāva attano nātho). These principles encourage ethical leadership and collective responsibility, which align with the goal of community well-being.

Circular Economy and Textile Waste Management

The Circular Economy (CE) is a restorative and regenerative system that aims to minimize waste, maximize resource efficiency, and close material loops through Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3 Rs) (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2022) has highlighted circular textile

management as a key strategy for achieving sustainable production and consumption, especially under SDG 12. In Thailand, the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA, 2023) reported that textile waste accounts for over 500,000 tons per year, of which approximately 70% is unrecycled. Adopting community-level textile recycling and upcycling practices can significantly reduce environmental impact while supporting local economies. When combined with Buddhist teachings that advocate moderation (Majjhimāpaṭipadā) and interdependence (Idappaccayatā), circular textile management becomes not only an environmental solution but also a moral practice that reflects mindfulness and responsibility toward all beings.

Elderly Well-being

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), elderly well-being encompasses physical, mental, and social health, allowing older adults to live with dignity, purpose, and participation in society. In the Thai context, Suwanna Sangsuk (2022) found that creative community activities such as weaving, local craftwork, and meditation significantly enhance the mental health and life satisfaction of elderly people. Furthermore, Panithan Jitboon et al. (2024) reported that intergenerational learning—where elders transmit traditional wisdom to younger generations—can reduce loneliness, restore a sense of self-worth, and strengthen social bonds within the community. This aligns with Buddhist perspectives on sati-sampajañña (mindful awareness) and karuṇā (compassion), which emphasize mutual care and meaningful coexistence.

-Buddhist Principles and Social Development

The application of Buddhist teachings in social innovation emphasizes the transformation of human

consciousness as the foundation for sustainable change. Phra Maha Apichat Thammābhinnando (2023) proposed that Buddhist Social Innovation operates through three core ethical mechanisms:

-Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination): understanding the interconnection of all phenomena;

-Iddhipāda (Four Bases of Accomplishment): cultivating desire, effort, thoughtfulness, and investigation as drivers of innovation;

-Sappurisa-dhamma (Seven Qualities of a Good Person): nurturing moral integrity and social responsibility.

Phra Maha Apichat Thammābhinnando (2023) further demonstrated that the Baworn Model—linking Home, Temple, and School—acts as a living system of social harmony and knowledge sharing. This model fosters balanced community development by integrating spiritual cultivation, cultural continuity, and civic engagement.

In summary, previous studies support the integration of Buddhist ethics with social innovation and circular economy principles as a holistic approach to solving contemporary problems. This synthesis provides the conceptual foundation for developing the Buddhist Circular Model in the present study.

Research Methodology

This research employed a qualitative approach using Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the core methodology. The study emphasized community participation and mutual learning among stakeholders, with the aim of developing a Buddhist Social Innovation Model that enhances elderly well-being through circular textile waste management.

Research Design

The research was conducted through four main stages: Community Preparation: Establishing trust and collaboration with community leaders, temples, and local schools to build participation under the Baworn framework (Home–Temple–School). Data Collection: Conducting in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation with elderly weavers, monks, teachers, and local administrators. Model Development: Synthesizing findings from field data and Buddhist doctrines to design the Buddhist Circular Model. Validation and Reflection: Presenting the model to community members and experts for feedback and refinement through collaborative reflection sessions.

Population and Participants

The participants consisted of 25 key informants selected through purposive sampling, including: 3 monks, who served as spiritual mentors and community advisors; 4 community leaders and local administrators responsible for managing local projects; 4 teachers and students, representing educational institutions within the community; 10 elderly artisans and local weavers, directly involved in textile production; and 4 local officials and volunteers, supporting community development activities. These participants were chosen based on their roles, experience, and involvement in community development, ensuring diverse perspectives across spiritual, social, and economic dimensions.

Research Instruments

Three primary tools were used for data collection: a Semi-structured Interview Guide, designed to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives regarding Buddhist values and textile waste management. Observation Record Form: for documenting community

activities, interactions, and behavioral patterns during fieldwork. Focus Group Discussion Framework: facilitating dialogue among stakeholders to co-create the Buddhist Circular Model collaboratively.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected over an eight-month period (January–August 2025) through both formal and informal participation in community activities. The researcher engaged in textile workshops, temple-based training sessions, and community meetings to gain deep insight into the lived experiences of the elderly. All sessions were recorded and transcribed for analysis, and the data were triangulated across multiple sources to ensure validity and reliability.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis, focusing on identifying core themes related to Buddhist Social Innovation and Circular Economy principles. The analysis process involved: Data Reduction: categorizing raw data into thematic clusters; Data Display: mapping relationships among Buddhist principles, community participation, and environmental outcomes; Conclusion Drawing and Verification: synthesizing results into a conceptual framework known as the Buddhist Circular Model. This analytical process followed the interpretive paradigm, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human experience and Buddhist philosophical thought, particularly the principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination).

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the credibility and rigor of the findings, the following strategies were employed: Triangulation: cross-verification of data through multiple sources and methods; Member Checking: validating interpretations and conclusions with participants; Peer Debriefing: consulting academic experts in Buddhist Studies and Social Innovation for critical feedback; and Thick Description: providing detailed contextual accounts to enhance transferability of the findings.

Ethics statement / IRB

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the [Name of Institutional Review Board]. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Findings

The findings from fieldwork and participatory collaboration with the Ban Pakhao Community, Ang Thong Province, revealed three core themes that constitute the foundation of the Buddhist Circular Model. These themes correspond to the Baworn integration framework and Buddhist social development principles. The results demonstrated that the integration of Buddhist doctrines, community participation, and circular textile waste management leads to both tangible and intangible transformations within the community. Specifically, elderly participants experienced improved well-being, strengthened social roles, and spiritual fulfillment, while the community as a whole gained greater environmental awareness and social harmony.

Community Context and Problem Situation

The Ban Pakhao community is well-known for its traditional handwoven plaid textiles (pha khao ma).

However, due to the aging population and lack of new generations in the weaving industry, many workshops have closed or reduced production. Large amounts of leftover fabric and textile waste have accumulated, creating both environmental and economic challenges. The elderly population—though rich in knowledge and craftsmanship—faced declining income, isolation, and diminished social participation. Despite these challenges, the community exhibited strong spiritual and cultural capital centered on Buddhist values and temple-based learning.

-Process of Developing the Buddhist Circular Model

The participatory process identified a progressive transformation through four key stages: Awareness Building: Raising understanding of environmental and spiritual interdependence (Idappaccayatā). Engagement and Empowerment: Encouraging elderly participants to apply their weaving skills in textile reuse and redesign. Integration and Collaboration: Linking homes, temples, and schools through the Baworn network to form a learning ecosystem. Reflection and Reinforcement: Strengthening moral consciousness, compassion (karuṇā), and collective responsibility through Buddhist teachings and practice.

-The Buddhist Circular Model

Based on the data analysis, the Buddhist Circular Model was synthesized as a systemic and interdependent framework comprising three main dimensions. (See Table 1 for detailed components of the model.)

Table 1. Components of the Buddhist Circular Model.

No.	**Dimension**	**Core Components**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Underlying Buddhist**
1	**Baworn Integration** (*Home–Temple–School–Government*)	Home: Learning and production base - Temple: Spiritual and moral center - School: Knowledge transfer hub - Local Government: Policy and resource support	Strengthened community collaboration, intergenerational learning, and shared responsibility	*Idappaccayatā (*Interdependent Origination*)*, *Saṅgahavatthu* (Four Principles of Social Harmony)
2	Circular Textile Process	- Sorting, redesigning, reweaving, and upcycling textile waste - Community-based eco-design and production - Marketing through Buddhist fair and temple networks	Reduced textile waste (over 40%), eco-friendly product creation, increased local income	*Majjhimāpaṭipadā* (The Middle Way), *Iddhipāda* (Four Bases of Accomplishment)
3	Elderly Well-being	- Active aging through creative and spiritual engagement - Knowledge sharing between generations	Improved self-esteem, reduced loneliness,	*Brahmavihāra 4* (Divine Abodes), *Sappurisa-dhamma*

		- Meditation and mindfulness practices integrated with weaving	sense of pride and belonging among elders	(Seven Qualities of the Good Person)

Note. Data were derived from in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and focus group discussions with community members. The 40% waste reduction figure is an estimate based on monthly logs recorded by the Ban Pakhao community cooperative during the project period (January–August 2025).

-Model Interpretation

The Buddhist Circular Model represents a holistic approach that connects environmental consciousness with spiritual and social dimensions. The Baworn framework provides the operational base, the Circular Textile Process embodies the ecological mechanism, and Elderly Well-being reflects the human dimension of transformation. These three dimensions are dynamically interdependent, revolving around the Buddhist principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination)—illustrating that well-being arises from mutual causation among individuals, society, and nature. The model thus promotes both sustainable community development and inner spiritual balance, aligning with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and the UN SDGs (Goals 3, 12, and 17).

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings confirm that Buddhist Social Innovation (BSI), when integrated with circular textile waste management, serves as an effective mechanism for promoting both material and spiritual well-being among the elderly. This aligns with global discussions on sustainable

development that emphasize holistic well-being integrating environmental, social, and moral dimensions. The Baworn integration (Home–Temple–School–Government) provides a functional framework for community collaboration, transforming traditional institutions into dynamic learning spaces that nurture ecological awareness and spiritual growth. This reflects the Saṅgahavatthu 4 (Four Principles of Social Harmony): generosity, kind speech, altruistic conduct, and equality— fostering mutual understanding and collective participation. The Buddhist Circular Model demonstrates how Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination) operates as both a metaphysical principle and a practical system for community resilience. Every element—from material reuse to emotional renewal—arises through interdependence. The circular flow of textiles mirrors the cyclical nature of existence in Buddhist thought, illustrating harmony between humans and the environment. While the Circular Economy focuses on minimizing waste, Buddhist Social Innovation extends this perspective by emphasizing inner transformation—cultivating mindfulness (sati) and compassion (karuṇā) in daily consumption and production. This transformation was most visible among the elderly participants, who reported renewed self-worth and mental clarity. Through weaving and recycling activities, they experienced a meditative process that enhanced mindfulness and concentration, similar to kammaṭṭhāna (mental cultivation). Thus, BSI contributes not only to environmental sustainability but also to spiritual rejuvenation and human dignity, consistent with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Regarding Purpose 1, the study identified that elderly residents of Ban Pakhao faced limited income opportunities, growing volumes of textile waste, and social isolation. These

findings highlight community needs and provide clear entry points for intervention.

Regarding Purpose 2, the designed participatory process—anchored in the Baworn approach—proved both feasible and effective. Integrating temple-based moral learning, school-led knowledge transfer, and community workshops strengthened local governance and fostered collective responsibility.

Regarding Purpose 3, the synthesized Buddhist Circular Model offers a replicable framework for sustainable textile waste management that enhances elderly well-being. During the pilot period, textile waste decreased by approximately 40%, based on cooperative waste records, while elders reported higher self-esteem and stronger intergenerational connections. These results demonstrate both environmental and social benefits achieved through the model's application.

In sum, Buddhist Social Innovation transforms circular textile management into a path of sustainable community development grounded in compassion, mindfulness, and interdependence—bridging material sufficiency with inner well-being.

-Recommendations

1. Policy Recommendations

Government and local administrative bodies should establish "Buddhist Circular Learning Centers" at the community level to integrate local wisdom, environmental management, and spiritual education. Universities, temples, and local schools should collaborate to develop academic–spiritual curricula on Buddhist Social Innovation, enabling monks, teachers, and community leaders to co-design sustainable development programs. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security could adopt the Buddhist

Circular Model as a framework for promoting active aging policies, encouraging lifelong learning and intergenerational dialogue.

2. Community Recommendations

Communities should be encouraged to expand the Baworn collaboration network beyond local boundaries, forming inter-community partnerships that exchange knowledge and resources related to textile recycling and sustainable living. Temples should continue serving as centers for spiritual empowerment and ethical reflection, providing moral support for sustainable community action. Local artisans and elderly groups should be supported in developing eco-friendly textile products under community brands, promoting local economies and green livelihoods.

3. Academic Recommendations

Future research should conduct quantitative studies to measure changes in the well-being of the elderly before and after participation in circular textile programs. A comparative study should be conducted between different provinces to identify contextual factors influencing the success of Buddhist Social Innovation. Researchers should explore the development of a "Buddhist Well-being Index (BWI)" that integrates spiritual, environmental, and social indicators for assessing community sustainability.

-Conclusion

The study concludes that the Buddhist Circular Model represents a practical and spiritual approach to community development in Thailand's aging society. By integrating Buddhist principles with circular economy practices, it fosters ecological balance, social harmony, and spiritual fulfillment. This model not only addresses the physical issue of textile waste but also revives the emotional and moral vitality of the elderly. It exemplifies how ancient Buddhist wisdom can guide modern innovation toward sustainable

and compassionate societies — fulfilling both the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Ultimately, Buddhist Social Innovation is not merely about creating new systems but about reawakening human consciousness — reminding communities that sus

Limitation and Future Research

-Limitation of the Study

Although this research successfully developed the Buddhist Circular Model for enhancing elderly well-being through circular textile waste management, certain limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize its findings.

Contextual Limitation: The study was conducted solely in Ban Pakhao Community, Ang Thong Province, which possesses unique socio-cultural characteristics such as strong religious institutions and pre-existing weaving traditions. Therefore, while the findings provide valuable insights, they may not be directly generalizable to other communities without similar cultural and spiritual structures.

Temporal Limitation: The field study covered a relatively short period of eight months. As a result, long-term impacts—particularly regarding behavioral change and economic sustainability—require further longitudinal monitoring to confirm enduring effects of the Buddhist Circular Model.

- Methodological Limitation

The research employed a qualitative participatory design, which emphasizes depth over breadth. The conclusions reflect the lived experiences of a specific group of participants rather than statistically measurable outcomes.

Quantitative or mixed-method studies could complement these results in future investigations.

-Future Research Directions

The findings from this study open several promising avenues for future exploration:

Model Expansion: Future research should apply and adapt the Buddhist Circular Model to other forms of waste management, such as plastic, food, or electronic waste, to evaluate its flexibility and cross-sectoral potential for sustainable development.

Quantitative Validation: To measure the precise impact of Buddhist Social Innovation on elderly well-being, future studies could employ quantitative indicators (e.g., psychological health, self-esteem scores, income variation) combined with qualitative reflections for triangulated results.

Comparative Studies: Cross-cultural comparative research between Thailand, Laos, and other Southeast Asian Buddhist societies could reveal contextual similarities and differences in applying Buddhist principles to social innovation and circular economy practices.

Digital Integration: Exploring digital learning platforms or virtual knowledge networks for Buddhist Social Innovation could help sustain community engagement among younger generations and enhance intergenerational dialogue.

-Final Reflection

In essence, this study serves as both an academic and spiritual journey. Its limitations highlight the dynamic nature of Buddhist Social Innovation, which, by its very principle of Idappaccayatā (Interdependent Origination), must evolve according to the conditions and capacities of each community. The researcher envisions that future studies will not only refine the Buddhist Circular Model as a practical

tool but also deepen its spiritual dimension, transforming sustainability from an external goal into an inner state of wisdom (paññā), compassion (karuṇā), and mindfulness (sati)

Forward (for supporting)

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Finally, the researcher expresses deep gratitude to the senior scholars, mentors, and spiritual teachers who inspired this work through their guidance in the integration of Buddhist philosophy with modern sustainable development. May this study contribute to the growth of knowledge, compassion, and peace — both within individuals and across communities.

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The Buddhist Innovation: Sustainable approaches to solve social problems

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Abstract

As the spiritual center, Buddhism consists of many social innovations, whether in economic, social and political dimensions, etc., which promote unity, stability and peace for society, as well as develop the quality of life to gain sustainable economic and social stability. Ultimately, it will help to achieve one's life goal, which is filled with true and sustainable happiness. Accordingly, this article aims to present a Buddhist innovation for solving social problems sustainably, namely the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccas): 1) Dukkha-Ariyasacca: it is to carefully study of identifying and distinguishing the arisen problem; 2) Samudaya-Ariyasacca, it is to study of the origin and cause of that problem; 3) Nirodha-Ariyasacca, it is to study of finding the most correct and effective ways to solve the problem and planning for action; and 4) Magga-Ariyasacca, it is the process of implementing and solving problems according to the plan that has been set systematically, which will lead to solving social problems sustainably.

Key Words: Buddhist Innovation, Solving, Social Problem

Introduction

Social problems refer to situations that have an impact on a large number of people in society and that people believe they should work together to solve the problem to make it better. The cause of social problems comes from social changes, such as the transition to an urban society, the transition from an agricultural society to an industrial society, and new values that cause social problems. It arises from some members of society not following the rules set by society, such as conflicts between rules and goals, failure of the social refinement process, or some members causing trouble to society, resulting in a lack of order and becoming a social problem. It arises from various social groups having conflicting opinions, needs, and benefits and not cooperating to solve social problems, such as taking advantage of employees, etc.

Currently, Nida Poll indicates that Thais accept the situation in 2025 as bad as ever. Regarding the issue of Thailand's economic situation in 2025 compared to 2024, 34.35 percent said it was as bad as ever, followed by 32.82 percent who said it was worse, 21.99 percent who said it was better, and 10.84 percent who said it was as good as ever. Regarding the issue of general quality of life in Thai society in 2025 compared to 2024, 34.43 percent said it was as bad as ever, followed by 33.20 percent who said it was worse, 20.46 percent who said it was better, and finally 11.91 percent who said it was as good as ever. (https://theactive.thaipbs.or.th/news/ politics-20250105)

In Thailand Buddhism has for a long time been recognized as the state religion of Thailand since its reaching Thailand and vicissitudes of its development are associated with the historical fortunes of the country (Rong Syamananda, 1977), p. 8). The Buddhism also provides many needful teachings in society, for example, the Five

Precepts, the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccas), the Middle Eightfold Path (*Atthangika-magga*) including other needful Dhammas. (C.P. Malalasekera, 1966, p. 354). Generally speaking, lots of Thai people still doubtfully thought the Buddha's teachings were very out of date; oppositely, the Buddha's teachings are always fresh; the way of Thai people's life has been inseparably connected with Buddhism from birth to death. Having given birth to a child, the parents approach a monk for an auspicious name for him. Children are taught to pray and pay homage to the Triple Gems (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) before going to bed, and to pay respect to monks. Many Buddhist families give food to the monks every morning; this is regarded as a way of accumulating merit and fulfills the duty of lay Buddhists to support the monks who preserve the Buddha's teachings for the world. When a young man reaches twenty years of age, the parents arrange for his temporary ordination as a monk, and he remains in the monkshood for at least the three months. In addition, the wises remain practice those on every moment of life.

Additionally, the Buddhism has had a stronghold in Thailand for more than a thousand years. As a religion of Wisdom, purification and universal love, it has shaped and reshaped the untamed nature to the Thai people till they have become generous and kind of heart. Accordingly, here is an attempt to present a Buddhist innovation for solving social problems sustainably, namely the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccas).

Problem Solving Theory

Most problem-solving theories are influenced by the work of Ernest & Newell (1969) and Newell & Simon (1972), which are human problem-solving theories in the form of simulation programs. This work helped to lay the

foundation for the information processing paradigm for the study of problem solving. The principle of the theory is that problem solving behavior consists of "method-end-analysis", which is to break down a problem into its components or subgoals and then manage to solve those subgoals one by one. This idea is in contrast to Wertheimer (1959), a psychologist in the Gestalt theory group who researched problem solving and emphasized the understanding of the structure of the problem. He believed that successful problem-solving behavior is because the person can see the overall structure of the problem. The principle of the theory is that learners must be encouraged to discover the nature of the problem or topic to be solved. Gaps, inconsistencies or disturbances are important stimuli for learning. Teaching must be based on the rules of organization, including proximity, concealment, similarity, and simplicity.

DeBono (1971 and 1991) proposed the idea of solving problems by applying the method of thinking outside the box, believing that most problems require different perspectives to be solved successfully. The way to get different perspectives on a problem is to break the problem into parts and then regroup them in a different way or randomly regroup some parts. This principle suggests four elements in solving problems: 1) Find the main ideas that are the basis for understanding the problem, 2) Find different ways of looking at the problem, 3) Let go of fixed thinking, and 4) Give yourself the opportunity to be open to other ideas.

And also McNamara (1999) stated that there are many ways to solve problems. No problem-solving method can solve every problem. However, there are basic practices that can be applied to solve problems. It requires practice first to

become familiar with it until it can be practiced naturally. The steps are as follows:

1. Identify the problem. This step is where most people tend to get confused. That is, they will start by thinking that it is a problem instead of thoroughly understanding why they think it is a problem. Problem identification requires information from yourself and others, which is obtained by asking questions such as: What is the cause that makes you think there is a problem? Where did the problem occur? How did it occur? When did it occur? Who is it affecting? And why did it occur? Then write an explanation of what is happening at that time. How should it really be? Try to explain as much as possible. Write specifically and cover the issues of what, where, how, with whom, and why.

2. Look for the real cause of the problem. At this stage, it is very important to receive information from other people who are aware of the problem and from those affected by the problem. Data collection should be done individually to obtain more information. Record your own opinions and what you have heard from others. Then write an explanation of the cause of the problem in the form of what is happening. Where, when, how, with whom, and why.

3. List the alternatives for how to solve the problem. At this stage, involve other people, unless the problem is personal. Brainstorm and find several alternatives to solve the problem, and filter them to find the best idea. When generating a variety of ideas, be careful not to judge whether they are good or bad. Just write down what you hear. The most appropriate skill for identifying the cause of the problem is systems thinking.

4. Select a solution to select the best solution,

5. Plan to implement the best solution or create an action plan.

6. Supervise the implementation of the plan, considering success indicators.

7. Check whether the problem has been solved. At this stage, one of the best ways to check whether the problem has been solved is to return to normal practice and observe the situation.

The Buddhistic Guidelines for solving social problems

Here can be said that there are several needful teachings for living in society, for example, the Five Precepts, the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccas), as well as the Middle Eightfold Path (*Atthangika-magga*), and so forth. The Four Noble Truths are the principles of Buddhism that the Lord Buddha discovered by himself and then announced to teach his disciples to follow. They are the principles of truth in seeking the purpose of life. Those who practice the Four Noble Truths will be able to eliminate defilements in their minds to the point of attaining high morality, which is the path to extinguishing suffering. In addition, the Four Noble Truths can also be used to solve problems in life very well. Practicing the Four Noble Truths will make you aware of the methods and processes for solving problems systematically and with real and sustainable results. The process of solving problems according to the Four Noble Truths includes:

1. Dukkha-Ariyasacca

Dukkha-Ariyasacca (The First Noble Truth) is generally translated by almost all scholars as 'The Noble Truth of Suffering', and it is interpreted to mean that life according to Buddhism is nothing but suffering and pain. Both translation and interpretation are highly unsatisfactory and misleading. It is because of this limited, free and easy translation, and its superficial interpretation, that many

people have been misled into regarding Buddhism as pessimistic. First of all, Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. If anything at all, it is realistic, for it takes a realistic view of life and of the world. It looks at things objectively (yathabhutam). It does not falsely lull you into living in a fool's paradise, nor does it frighten and agonize you with all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. It tells you exactly and objectively what you are and what the world around you is, and shows you the way to perfect freedom, peace, tranquility and happiness. (Walpola Rahula, 1974, p.17)

It is true that the Pali word dukkha (or Sanskrit duhkha) in ordinary usage means 'suffering', 'pain', 'sorrow' or 'misery', as opposed to the word sukha meaning 'happiness', 'comfort' or 'ease'. But the term dukkha as the First Noble Truth, which represents the Buddha's view of life and the world, has a deeper philosophical meaning and connotes enormously wider senses. It is admitted that the term dukkha in the First Noble Truth contains, quite obviously, the ordinary meaning of 'suffering', but in addition it also includes deeper ideas such as 'imperfection', 'impermanence', 'emptiness', 'insubstantiality'. It is difficult therefore to find one word to embrace the whole conception of the term dukkha as the First Noble Truth, and so it is better to leave it untranslated, than to give an inadequate and wrong idea of it by conveniently translating it as 'suffering' or 'pain'. (Walpola Rahula, 1974, p.17)

Buddhism is quite opposed to the melancholic, sorrowful, penitent and gloomy attitude of mind which is considered a hindrance to the realization of Truth. On the other hand, it is interesting to remember here that joy (piti) is one of the seven Bojjhangas or 'Factors of Enlightenment', the essential qualities to be cultivated for the realization of Nirvana.

2. Samudaya-Ariyasacca

Samudaya-Ariyasacca (The Second Noble Truth) is that of the arising or origin of dukkha (Dukkhasamudaja-arijasacca). The most popular and well-known definition of the Second Truth as found in innumerable places in the original texts runs as follows:

'It is this "thirst" (craving, tanha) which produces re-existence and re-becoming (ponobhavika), and which is bound up with passionate greed (nandiragasahagata), and which finds fresh delight now here and now there (tatratatrabhinandini), namely, (i) thirst for sense-pleasures (kama-tanha), (2) thirst for existence and becoming (1bhava-tanha) and (3) thirst for non-existence (selfannihilation, vibhava-tanha).'1 It is this 'thirst', desire, greed, craving, manifesting itself in various ways, that gives rise to all forms of suffering and the continuity of beings. But it should not be taken as the first cause, for there is no first cause possible as, according to Buddhism, everything is relative and inter-dependent. Even this 'thirst', tanha, which is considered as the cause or origin of dukkha, depends for its arising (samudaja) on something else, which is sensation (vedana), and sensation arises depending on contact (phassa), and so on and so forth goes on the circle which is known as Conditioned Genesis (Paṭicca-samuppada). (Walpola Rahula, 1974, p.29)

As long as there is this 'thirst' to be and to become, the cycle of continuity (samsara) goes on. It can stop only when its driving force, this 'thirst', is cut off through wisdom which sees Reality, Truth, Nirvana.

3. Nirodha-Ariyasacca

Nirodha-Ariyasacca (The Third Noble Truth) is that there is emancipation, liberation, freedom from suffering,

from the continuity of *dukkha.* This is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of *dukkha (Dukkhanirodhaariyasacca),* which is *Nibbdna,* more popularly known in its Sanskrit form of *Nirvana.*

To eliminate *dukkha* completely one has to eliminate the main root of *dukkha,* which is 'thirst' (*tanha*), as we saw earlier. Therefore Nirvana is known also by the term *Tanhakkhaya* 'Extinction of Thirst'. Now you will ask: But what is Nirvana ? Volumes have been written in reply to this quite natural and simple question; they have, more and more, only confused the issue rather than clarified it. The only reasonable reply to give to the question is that it can never be answered completely and satisfactorily in words, because human language is too poor to express the real nature of the Absolute Truth or Ultimate Reality which is Nirvana. Language is created and used by masses of human beings to express things and ideas experienced by their sense organs and their mind. A supramundane experience like that of the Absolute Truth is not of such a category. Therefore, there cannot be words to express that experience, just as the fish had no words in his vocabulary to express the nature of the solid land. The tortoise told his friend the fish that he (the tortoise) just returned to the lake after a walk on the land. 'Of course' the fish said, ' You mean swimming.' The tortoise tried to explain that one couldn't swim on the land, that it was solid, and that one walked on it. But the fish insisted that there could be nothing like it, that it must be liquid like his lake, with waves, and that one must be able to dive and swim there. (Walpola Rahula, 1974, p.35)

Nirvana is beyond all terms of duality and relativity. It is therefore beyond our conceptions of good and evil, right and wrong, existence and non-existence. Even the word 'happiness' *(sukha*) which is used to describe Nirvana has an entirely different sense here. Sariputta once said: 'O friend,

Nirvana is happiness! Nirvana is happiness!' Then Udayi asked: 'But, friend Sariputta, what happiness can it be if there is no sensation?' Sariputta's reply was highly philosophical and beyond ordinary comprehension: 'That there is no sensation itself is happiness'. Nirvana is beyond logic and reasoning *(*atakkavacara*)*. However much we may engage, often as a vain intellectual pastime, in highly speculative discussions regarding Nirvana or Ultimate Truth or Reality, we shall never understand it that way. A child in the kindergarten should not quarrel about the theory of relativity. Instead, if he follows his studies patiently and diligently, one day he may understand it. Nirvana is 'to be realized by the wise within themselves' (paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi*)*. If we follow the Path patiently and with diligence, train and purify ourselves earnestly, and attain the necessary spiritual development, we may one day realize it within ourselves—without taxing ourselves with puzzling and high-sounding words. (Walpola Rahula, 1974, pp.43-44)

4. Magga-Ariyasacca

Magga-Ariyasacca (The Fourth Noble Truth) is that of the Way leading to the Cessation of Dukkha (Dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā-ariyasacca*)*. This is known as the 'Middle Path' (Majjhimā Paṭipadā*),* because it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is 'low, common, unprofitable and the way of the ordinary people'; the other being the search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which is 'painful, unworthy and unprofitable'. (Walpola Rahula, 1974, p.45)

The followings are some more details of the Noble Eightfold Path:–

1) The Right View (Sammādiṭṭhi)

The Right View regarded as the most important is the beginning point to observe in accordance with the Middle Way (Majjhimāpaṭipadā) because a person without the right view cannot get right understanding before practicing. It is to help the practitioner to know what the Right Thought is, what the Right Speech is and what the Right Action is and so forth. The Right View is also meant to understand the Four Noble Truths, viz., the suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

According to the Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga),* the right outlook frees a person from ignorance and leads him to authentic peace in life.

Seeing rightly is its characteristic, the setting forth, of the elements is its function, the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance is its manifestation. The path-factor which is possessed by one endowed with right outlook, which is associated with it and kills wrong aims and is the direction of the mind on the Nibbāna as the base is 'right aims.' (Bhikku Nanamoli (tr.), 1964, p. 605). To cultivate right understanding, one must be mindful and aware. To develop awareness, one must find clarity. To see things clearly, one must find stillness and strength within. Inner development then depends upon building inner strength and clarity (Sulak Sivaraksa, "et. al." (ed.), 1999, p. 170).

2) The Right Thought (Sammāsaṅkappa)

The Right Thought is to think of only the good things, i.e., the three wholesome thoughts (Kusala-vitakka) as follows:

(1) Renunciation–thinking,

(2) Thinking to get rid of ill–will, and

(3) Thinking to get rid of harm (E.M. Hare (tr.), 1988, p. 311).

3) The Right Speech (Sammāvācā)

The Right Speech is to avoid lying, slanderous speech, harsh speech and gossiping including several kinds of speech that may make other get pain, unhappiness and suffering.

4) The Right Action (Sammākammanta)

The Right Action is basically is meant to observe the threefold good conduct comprising of abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct. At the same way, a certain one should not harm all kinds of living things, but spread a good wish toward them somehow. While, he abandons taking what is not given and has no intercourse with any girl.

5) The Right Livelihood (Sammā-ājīva)

The Right Livelihood signifies to avoid the wrong mode of livelihood (Micchā-ājīva) which are trickery, cajolery, insinuating, dissembling and rapacity for gain upon gain (I.B. Horner (tr.), 1993, p. 118). And also a Buddhist lay disciple should not do the following trades:–

(1) Trade in weapons,

(2) Trade in human beings,

(3) Trade in flesh (trade in animals for meat),

(4) Trade in spirits, and

(5) Trade in poison (E.M. Hare (tr.), Op. Cit., p. 153).

6) The Right Effort (Sammāvāyāma)

Actually, the Right Effort is signified the great or perfect four efforts (Sammappadhāna) which are as follows:–

(1) The effort of restraint,

(2) The effort of abandoning (effort to overcome),

(3) The effort of making–become (developing),

(4) The effort of watching over (maintaining) (F.L. Woodward (tr.), 1992, p. 17).

According to writer's opinion, the Right Effort is considered as the "Quality Assurance System in Buddhism." In order to prove the idea, here is an example to apply this oldest quality assurance system in ordinary daily life, for example, there is a paper waiting for proceeding to the quality assurance system. Through the First Effort, the paper is to be studied exhaustively about its nature; which is easy to be destroyed by heat (fire) and soak (water), and be careful not to put the paper close to fire and water. The Second Effort: it is an effort to abandon the several causes or factors that might make the paper get destroy or damage by keeping it far away from both fire and water. The Third Effort: it is an effort to develop the paper to be able to become stable or not easy to get destroy or damage by both fire and water. And the Fourth Effort: it is to keep the developed paper in the locked box carefully and properly.

7) The Right Mindfulness (Sammāsati)

In Buddhism the Right Mindfulness is meant the four foundations of mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna) regarded as a most important way of practicing in order to attain the Nibbāna (*the Ultimate Happiness*). The four foundations of mindfulness are the contemplation of body, the contemplation of feeling, the contemplation of mind and the contemplation of mind-objects.

8) Right Concentration (Sammāsamādhi)

The concentration (Samādhi) means the mental state of being firmly fixed; it is the fixing of the mind on a single object (A.P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera, 1980, p. 97). The Right Concentration (Sammāsamādhi) is signified the Four Absorptions (Jhānas).

With regard to the Four Noble Truths we have four functions to perform:

1. The First Noble Truth is *Dukkha*, the nature of life, its suffering, its sorrows and joys, its imperfection and

unsatisfactoriness, its impermanence and insubstantiality. With regard to this, our function is to understand it as a fact, clearly and completely.

2. The Second Noble Truth is the Origin of *Dukkha,* which is desire, 'thirst', accompanied by all other passions, defilements and impurities. A mere understanding of this fact is not sufficient. Here our function is to discard it, to eliminate, to destroy and
eradicate it.

3. The Third Noble Truth is the Cessation of *Dukkha,* Nirvana, the Absolute Truth, the Ultimate Reality. Here our function is to realize it.

4. The Fourth Noble Truth is the Path leading to the realization of Nirvana. A mere knowledge of the Path, however complete, will not do. In this case, our function is to follow it and keep to it.

Finally, here it can be concluded that The Four Noble Truths are the principles of Buddhism that the Lord Buddha discovered by himself and then announced to teach his disciples to follow. They are the principles of truth in seeking the purpose of life. Those who practice the Four Noble Truths will be able to eliminate defilements in their minds to the point of attaining high morality, which is the path to extinguishing suffering. In addition, the Four Noble Truths can also be used to solve problems in life very well. Practicing the Four Noble Truths will make you aware of the methods and processes for solving problems systematically and with real and sustainable results.

Summary

Here, it can be summarized that as the spiritual center Buddhism can provide the harmony, stability and happiness for all in forms of traditional cultures and

several festivities helping to bind people of different groups together harmoniously. Additionally, having practiced the said Buddhist Teaching in daily life, people would be able to develop their life's quality with sustainable socio-economic wealth, to attain their own life, goals being full of real and sustainable happiness, and also to live together peacefully and happily.

On the other hand, these days as well known that many Buddhists do not know exactly how to apply the Buddhist teaching in daily life, while they just only try to follow the ancient tradition. Consequently, Buddhist scholars tend to campaign in offering knowledge and understanding of the real Buddhist teachings, stressing ability to apply those in daily life. And also in the current day, the Buddhist teachings are not practiced in social life because the Buddhist organization lacks of active learned teachers. Accordingly, in Thai society, numerous people are facing mental sickness and really need a skillful one, i.e., the learned monks who know to provide a proper treatment to them. Meanwhile, there is no balance between number of learned monks and people facing mental sickness. Then the theologians with a hope to take back a great deal situation of Buddhism in the past are trying to give a good enough understanding of the Buddhist teachings somehow.

Finally, it can be summarized here that as the spiritual center, Buddhism consists of many social innovations, whether in economic, social and political dimensions, etc., which promote unity, stability and peace for society, as well as develop the quality of life to gain sustainable economic and social stability. Ultimately, it will help to achieve one's life goal, which is filled with true and sustainable happiness. Accordingly, this article aims to

present a Buddhist innovation for solving social problems sustainably, namely the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccas): 1) Dukkha-Ariyasacca: it is to carefully study of identifying and distinguishing the arisen problem; 2) Samudaya-Ariyasacca, it is to study of the origin and cause of that problem; 3) Nirodha-Ariyasacca, it is to study of finding the most correct and effective ways to solve the problem and planning for action; and 4) Magga-Ariyasacca, it is the process of implementing and solving problems according to the plan that has been set systematically, which will lead to solving social problems sustainably.

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Luang Prabang: Cultural Tourism in a UNESCO World Heritage Buddhist City

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Abstract

This study is based on the author's fieldwork conducted from June 13 - 15, 2025, under the Arts and Cultural Study Tour Project in Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic, organized by the Graduate Program in Social Innovation and Creative Culture at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. This research presents an analysis of cultural tourism in Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 1995, examining the integration of religious architecture, Buddhist traditions, and traditional lifestyles that remain authentically preserved. The research methodology comprises qualitative research approaches through field surveys, participant observation, and in-depth interviews with local key informants, including Buddhist monks, traditional craftsmen, and community representatives.

The findings reveal that Luang Prabang possesses distinctive characteristics of cultural tourism through the integration of Buddhist principles with daily life practices. The traditional alms-giving ceremony with sticky rice

reflects the practice of dana paramita. Local wisdom in textile weaving and silvercraft demonstrates the application of mindfulness (sati-sampajañña) and diligent effort (viriya). Buddhist temples and monasteries function both as tourist attractions and as centers for dharma practice and education. The tourism model in Luang Prabang is characterized by its seamless integration with community life, enabling visitors to experience authentic and spiritually meaningful encounters. Simultaneously, this approach generates economic benefits for local communities and serves as a mechanism supporting cultural preservation. This study concludes that Luang Prabang represents an appropriate model of sustainable cultural tourism within the context of World Heritage cities.

Keywords: Luang Prabang, World Heritage City, Cultural Tourism, Buddhism, Cultural Conservation

Introduction

In an era in which cultural tourism has become increasingly popular and has attracted global attention, World Heritage Cities that are able to preserve their cultural identity in an intact and living manner have gained heightened significance. Luang Prabang — the former royal capital of the Lao People's Democratic Republic — represents one of the most outstanding examples. It demonstrates a distinctive integration of historical heritage and Buddhism, which formed the civilizational foundation of the region. Luang Prabang was inscribed as a Cultural World Heritage City in 1995 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995) due to its exceptional values in architecture, ritual traditions, and vernacular knowledge rooted in Buddhist cosmology (Woralanchak Boonyasurat, 2012). Situated at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan

rivers, the city possesses more than a millennium of historical depth (Chusak Witthayaphak, 2011). It is not only a former capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom but continues to function today as a vital spiritual and cultural centre of the Lao people. What distinguishes Luang Prabang from many other tourist destinations is that the local community continues to live daily life through Buddhist moral values. The sticky-rice almsgiving ritual reflects *dāna pāramī* and remains a major cultural signature (Boonna Jimanang, 2013); the continuation of vernacular textile weaving expresses *sati-sampajañña* through mindful craftsmanship (Charan Chaipratum, 2014); and the meticulous silvercraft tradition demonstrates *viriya* through sustained effort. These practices illustrate that Buddhism in Luang Prabang is not an abstract symbol but a socially operative ethic embedded in everyday life. Thus, cultural heritage in Luang Prabang is not merely displayed — it is lived. Across the urban fabric of Luang Prabang, more than thirty active temples continue to function as living monastic centres — from Wat Xieng Thong, the "jewel of Lan Xang art," to Wat Visounnarat with its distinctive Makmo stupa (Woralanchak Boonyasurat, 2005). These temples are not simply tourist landmarks but serve as centres of Buddhist learning, spirituality, and textual heritage (Liya Fandee Sawan, 2015). Therefore, cultural tourism in Luang Prabang unfolds not only as aesthetic appreciation, but as lived cosmological experience — mediated through the interweaving of architecture, ritual, moral cultivation, and community memory.

Luang Prabang as a World Heritage City

Luang Prabang retains an historic urban fabric that reflects the cultural foundations of the former Lan Xang Kingdom. Despite political transitions and modernisation pressures, the city continues to display remarkable cultural

continuity because local communities maintain vernacular lifeways as part of lived Buddhist moral culture (Holt, 2009). Luang Prabang was inscribed as a Cultural World Heritage Site in 1995 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995) in recognition of its outstanding universal value in history, architecture, and cultural preservation. Located at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, the city possesses more than a thousand years of historical depth (Chusak Witthayaphak, 2011). As a former royal capital of Lan Xang, Luang Prabang's distinctiveness lies not only in its artistic architectural forms, but also in its ability to retain vernacular authenticity — where monastic precincts, traditional housing clusters, and spatial ordering remain materially legible within everyday life. The old urban layout, traditional timber houses, and monastic compounds in Luang Prabang remain remarkably intact, allowing visitors to encounter an authentic ambience of a historical Buddhist city that has survived across centuries (Woralanchak Boonyasurat, 2012). Although the city has passed through different political eras and waves of development, its architectural integrity — together with the endurance of customary ritual practice — enables Luang Prabang to function not merely as a preserved heritage zone, but as a living cultural landscape (Liya Fandee Sawan, 2015). In everyday life, residents continue to observe Buddhist observances, participate in seasonal rituals, and uphold values associated with moral cultivation and community merit-making. Thus, heritage in Luang Prabang does not survive solely through physical conservation; it persists as a socio-moral ecology in which Buddhism continues to animate daily life and cultural identity.

Field Experiences in Luang Prabang

A deeper understanding of Luang Prabang emerged through direct field engagement and dialogical knowledge exchange with local monastic elders. One of the most significant encounters was with Ven. Aonkeo Sidtivong — the Provincial Head Monk of Luang Prabang and Abbot of Phra-O Temple — whose interpretation of Buddhist wisdom offered an epistemic lens that elucidated how Buddhist values remain embedded within community life. In the Theravāda tradition, knowledge transmission (*paññā-bhāvanā*) is not limited to textual study but is cultivated through interpersonal exchange, observation, and lived participation (Holt, 2009). Conversations with monastic teachers therefore did not merely provide contextual information, but enabled the researcher to witness how Dhamma principles are socially embodied in everyday practice, revealing that Buddhist moral ecology continues to operate as the ideological core of cultural identity in Luang Prabang.



Figure 1. On 14 June 2025, Asst. Prof. Dr. Udom Bandit, Chair of the Master's Program in Social Innovation and Creative Culture, together with faculty members, led graduate students on a study visit to Luang Prabang and introduced further study opportunities at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The group met with Ven. Aonkeo Sidtivong, Provincial Head Monk of Luang Prabang and Abbot of Phra-O Temple, at Phra-O Temple, Lao PDR. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 13 June 2025)

Tai Lue Textile Wisdom

Ban Phanom serves as an important centre of Tai Lue weaving, where textile knowledge has been transmitted across generations for several centuries. The motifs, colour layering, and pattern structures encapsulate vernacular cosmology and local narrative imagination. Charan Chaipratum (2014) emphasises that each woven design represents cultural memory and epistemic encoding — not merely decorative art — because weaving operates as a cultural technology that stores cosmological concepts, animistic references, and Buddhist symbolism. In this context, craftsmanship becomes a moral discipline grounded in *sati-sampajañña*, where attentiveness, concentration, and patient labour are cultivated through repetitive rhythmic action at the loom. Thus, Tai Lue textiles in Luang Prabang illustrate how cultural heritage is not only preserved through museums or documentation but reproduced through embodied artisanship in everyday life.



Figure 2. The author, as one of the academic supervisors of the Social Innovation and Creative Culture Program, also visited Ban Phanom community to directly experience local cultural assets and Tai Lue textile craftsmanship. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 14–15 June 2025)

Silvercraft Heritage in Luang Prabang

Silvercraft in Luang Prabang reflects not only refined artisanal mastery but also the moral discipline embedded in Buddhist-oriented labour ethics. Woralanchak Boonyasurat (2012) notes that the royal silver workshop — which historically produced ceremonial objects for the Lao monarchy — represents a living lineage of craftsmanship that has been transmitted across generations. Each object is meticulously hand-made through attentive incremental micro-gestures, illustrating *viriya* (diligent effort) and *ussāha* (sustained perseverance) as embodied practice rather

than abstract doctrine. Silverwork, therefore, operates as a cultural technology in which aesthetic value, moral cultivation, and economic livelihood converge. In this sense, craft production in Luang Prabang is not a marginal occupational niche but a key mechanism through which Buddhist virtue-practice is materialised in everyday life.

Luang Prabang as a Reflection of Culture, Belief, and Buddhism

Sticky-Rice Almsgiving Tradition

The sticky-rice almsgiving ritual is one of the most emblematic cultural practices of Luang Prabang and remains central to the city's moral landscape. Boonna Jimanang (2013) observes that this practice is not merely a touristic spectacle but a lived ethical act that expresses *dāna pāramī* — the perfection of generosity in Theravāda Buddhism. At dawn, local residents prepare sticky rice and small portions of food to respectfully offer to monks during their morning alms round. The performative simplicity of this ritual — quiet body posture, controlled movement, and non-verbal presence — cultivates humility, self-restraint, and non-possession while reaffirming the reciprocal relationship between the Sangha and the lay community. Thus, the sticky-rice almsgiving tradition does not function as a surface-level cultural show for outsiders; it manifests a socially embodied moral pedagogy that continues to shape the lived identity of Luang Prabang.



Figure 3. Faculty members and master's students (n = 13) from the Master's Program in Social Innovation and Creative Culture, Faculty of Social Sciences, MCU, participated in the morning sticky-rice almsgiving ritual in front of Sane Sukharam Temple.
Our accommodation, Villa Sane Suk, was located directly opposite the temple.
(Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 15 June 2025)

The cultural worldview of Luang Prabang is fundamentally grounded in Theravāda Buddhist cosmology, where doctrinal principles are not confined to monastic institutions but enacted through everyday social behaviour. Holt (2009) emphasises that religious meaning in Lao Buddhist culture is performed through lived ritual practice rather than abstract theological formulation. This is evident in the sticky-rice almsgiving ritual, which embodies *dāna pāramī*; in textile craftsmanship, where attentive weaving becomes a cultivation of *sati-sampajañña* (Charan Chaipratum, 2014); and in the meticulous silvercraft

tradition, which manifests *viriya* through disciplined effort (Woralanchak Boonyasurat, 2012). These practices demonstrate that Buddhism in Luang Prabang remains a socially operative matrix — not a symbolic ornament. Cultural identity is therefore not produced merely through architectural preservation but through the continuous reproduction of moral values, artisanal epistemologies, and ritualised ways of being. The lived synthesis of belief, culture, and Buddhist moral cultivation thus constitutes the core foundation of Luang Prabang's distinctiveness as a living World Heritage City.



Figure 4. Faculty members and master's students (n = 13) from the Master's Program in Social Innovation and Creative Culture, Faculty of Social Sciences, MCU, participated in the morning sticky-rice almsgiving ritual in front of Sane Sukharam Temple. Villa Sane Suk — our accommodation — was located directly opposite the temple. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 15 June 2025)

The Cultural Tourism Model of Luang Prabang: Interlinking Buddhism, Lifestyles, and Architectural Heritage of a World Heritage City

Religious Architecture as a Primary Attraction – Wat Xieng Thong

Wat Xieng Thong — often referred to as the "jewel of Lan Xang architecture" — is one of the most iconic religious landmarks of Luang Prabang. Woralanchak Boonyasurat (2005) explains that the temple was originally constructed in 1557 during the reign of King Setthathirath, and historically served both as a sacred merit-making offering for the kingdom and as a ceremonial venue for royal enthronement rituals. Although modest in scale, the ubosot exhibits a harmonious proportioning of tiered roofs that descend in three gentle layers, visually symbolising the ascent from the human plane toward the celestial realm. The most recognisable feature is the "Tree of Life" mosaic on the rear façade — a coloured-glass composition that represents Buddhist cosmology, flourishing vitality, and the expansion of the Dhamma (Ven. Peng Sengmany & Phra Khru Theerasutthapoj, 2023). The spatial organisation within the compound — including the scripture house, *mān* shrine, and stupas — reflects a cosmological spatial grammar in which the ubosot corresponds to Mount Meru, the mythical axis of the Buddhist universe. Today, Wat Xieng Thong is not merely an architectural monument; it remains a living sacred space where meditative ambience, natural light, and atmospheric stillness support contemplative interiority for both practitioners and visitors.



Figure 5. The *mān* shrine and the sacred Buddha image associated with traditional rain-invocation rituals in Luang Prabang, which is ceremonially brought down for ritual bathing every year. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 15 June 2025)

Another distinctive feature of Wat Xieng Thong is the "Tree of Life" — a coloured-glass mosaic located on the rear façade of the ubosot. Although it is not an actual tree, this artistic representation symbolises Buddhist cosmology. The Tree of Life illustrates the flourishing and expansion of the Dhamma, interwoven with Himavanta mythical beings and epic narrative elements. Moreover, the spatial organisation

of the temple compound — including the scripture repository, *mān* shrine, and stupas — reflects a cosmological ordering in which the ubosot operates as the central axis, analogous to Mount Meru, surrounded by components representing stars and continents of the Buddhist universe. The *mān* shrine houses highly valued Lao-Lan Xang style Buddha images, and the temple compound also preserves a traditional royal funeral chariot: a lacquer-and-gold wooden structure once used in state funerary rites, exemplifying both devotion and artisanal refinement. The beauty of Wat Xieng Thong is therefore not limited to its visible forms; its architectural design intentionally facilitates meditative ambience — such as through natural light apertures, ventilation systems, and spatial stillness — enabling pilgrims to cultivate mental composure. Today, Wat Xieng Thong remains a living spiritual centre for the people of Luang Prabang, while simultaneously attracting cultural tourists from around the world.

Wat Visounnarat and the "Makmo" Stupa

Wat Visounnarat — commonly called Wat Visoun — is among the oldest temples in Luang Prabang, historically associated with the Lan Xang period and functioning as a significant religious and cultural centre of the former royal capital. Its most distinctive feature is the hemispherical "Makmo" stupa, whose rounded melon-like form symbolises the *paduma* (lotus) typology in Buddhist sacred architecture. Woralanchak Boonyasurat (2005) explains that the lotus form represents purity rising from the mud, and thus metaphorically expresses the possibility of spiritual liberation through wisdom cultivation. The stupa's structural composition reflects intercultural exchanges: Khmer solidity at the base, refined Lan Na sensibility in the upper register, and Lao vernacular detailing at the ornamental surface.

Ancient bronze Buddha images and palm-leaf manuscripts preserved at the site further indicate its historical role as a doctrinal repository (Liya Fandee Sawan, 2015). Consequently, Wat Visounnarat is not merely a static architectural monument but a living sanctuary whose ritual use, spatial symbolism, and performative material culture continue to sustain the cosmological imagination of the Lao Buddhist world.



Figure 6. The author and accompanying academic team paying homage to the Buddha images and venerating the Makmo Stupa at Wat Visounnarat, Luang Prabang. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 14–15 June 2025)

Wat Pa Pone Nao and the Phonphao Stupa

Wat Pa Pone Nao, located on a hill in the southern zone of Luang Prabang, offers a compelling integration of contemporary religious architecture and Theravāda Buddhist cosmology. The Phonphao Stupa situated at the centre of the compound is distinctive because visitors are able to enter and ascend through multiple internal levels — a spatial experience not commonly found in other regional stupas. Liya Fandee Sawan (2015) argues that Luang Prabang's heritage value lies not only in static preservation but in the continuation of spatial forms that enable lived engagement with Buddhist symbolism. The sequential movement upward — from visual encounter with Buddha images, to narrative jātaka murals, to a quiet meditative chamber, and finally to an open-air panoramic viewpoint — materialises the conceptual ascent toward wisdom described in Theravāda Buddhist cultivation. Holt (2009) notes that in Lao Buddhist settings, embodied movement and spatial ascent are not merely physical acts but serve as vehicles of meaning. Thus, Wat Pa Pone Nao demonstrates how architecture itself can function as a pedagogical interface that synthesises rituality, cosmology, and experiential learning.



Figure 7. Atmosphere of Wat Pa Pone Nao, a quiet and contemplative temple situated in Luang Prabang. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 15 June 2025)

Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual Tourism: Phousi Stupa

Phousi Stupa, positioned prominently on a hilltop in the centre of Luang Prabang, functions simultaneously as a sacred landmark and a city-wide spiritual orientation point. Visitors ascend more than 300 steps to reach the summit, and

the gradual bodily exertion required during this climb becomes a subtle contemplative exercise in itself. Holt (2009) emphasises that in Lao Buddhist settings, corporeal movement can serve as a modality of devotion — a way of "doing religion" through embodied practice rather than verbal articulation. From the summit, panoramic vistas reveal the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, clustered temple roofs, and layered mountain horizons, making Phousi one of the most emotionally affective spatial nodes in the city. Ritual observances continue to be performed on this hill during Buddhist festivals, which further affirms that Phousi is not merely a scenic overlook — it remains an experientially sacred terrain embedded in the lived cultural geography of Luang Prabang.

Within the conceptual frameworks of heritage and tourism studies, Phousi Hill exemplifies what UNESCO describes as the *spirit of place* — where landscape, memory, cosmology, and ritual intertwine (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995). Cohen's typology of tourist roles illustrates that visitors at Phousi do not remain confined to a single identity category; instead, they fluidly oscillate between leisure-oriented sightseeing, reflective contemplation, and existential pilgrimage. MacCannell's sacralization thesis further suggests that tourism itself can produce quasi-ritual meaning when aesthetic encounter merges with existential reflexivity. At sunset — when temple bells reverberate faintly from below and the gilded stupa reflects diminishing light — the ordinary becomes temporarily elevated into the sacred field of affective experience. Phousi therefore demonstrates how spirituality in Luang Prabang is produced not only through doctrine, but through landscape-as-ritual, where cosmological imagination is perceived as sensation rather than text.



Figure 8. The foot of Phousi Hill, where the author repeatedly visited and experienced the site at close proximity. (Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 14 June 2025)

Conclusion

The field observations conducted in Luang Prabang confirm that cultural tourism in this World Heritage City cannot be understood solely through aesthetic consumption of architecture or through visual appreciation of monuments. Rather, Buddhism continues to operate as the epistemic core of local cultural identity — shaping practices of giving, moral cultivation, craftsmanship, and spatial ethics in everyday life (Holt, 2009). The sticky-rice almsgiving embodies *dāna pāramī* (Boonna Jimanang, 2013); textile weaving manifests *sati-sampajañña* as embodied

attentiveness (Charan Chaipratum, 2014); and silvercraft demonstrates *viriya* through disciplined artisanal labour (Woralanchak Boonyasurat, 2012). These field experiences affirm that heritage in Luang Prabang is not merely displayed — it is lived.

From a theoretical perspective, Luang Prabang exemplifies UNESCO's "spirit of place" paradigm (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), in which cosmology, ritual, ethics, and material landscape co-produce cultural meaning. Cohen's tourist role typologies help explain how visitors move fluidly between leisure spectatorship and existential pilgrimage depending on affective intensity and situational frame. Meanwhile, MacCannell's sacralization thesis offers an interpretive lens to understand how aesthetic encounters in settings such as Phousi Hill can transform into a ritual-like experience — particularly at liminal moments such as sunset, when sensory ambience and cosmological symbolism converge. Thus, Luang Prabang is not only culturally rich — it is theoretically generative.

The sustainable future of Luang Prabang depends on heritage governance approaches that preserve not only tangible architecture but also the intangible cultural modalities that sustain Buddhist moral practice (Liya Fandee Sawan, 2015). This requires collaborative stewardship among local communities, monastic institutions, municipal authorities, and tourism actors. Community-based tourism frameworks, responsible visitor behaviour guidelines, value-sensitive interpretations, and capacity-building for artisans are concrete mechanisms that can support this effort. If governance foregrounds both heritage protection and moral ecology, Luang Prabang can continue to serve as a living Buddhist World Heritage City whose identity remains

culturally authentic while generating sustainable benefits for future generations.



Figure 9. Memorable ambience of Luang Prabang as personally experienced by the author.
(Photograph by: Kuanchanok Laosunthara, 15 June 2025)

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Buddhist integration and network collaboration in Flood crisis alleviation: a case study of Ayutthaya province, thailand

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Abstract

This study investigates flood crisis mitigation in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province with three objectives: (1) to examine the current state of mitigation efforts undertaken by public and private network organizations; (2) to identify factors influencing their effectiveness; and (3) to propose a Buddhist-integrated model for enhancing crisis response. The framework integrates Sangahavatthu 4, the Deming Cycle (PDCA), and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. A mixed method design was employed, involving 19 key informants and a survey of 400 households selected through Taro Yamane's formula. Data were gathered via in-depth interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. Qualitative data underwent content analysis, while quantitative analysis included means, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression.

Findings indicate that current mitigation practices emphasize systematic planning and multi-sectoral coordination, though challenges remain in response time and openness to community feedback. Quantitative results show all variables with mean scores above 3.6, strong correlations

($r > 0.5$, $p < 0.01$), and over 50% explained variance, confirming significant effects of independent variables on mitigation outcomes. The proposed Buddhist-integrated approach highlights planning rooted in dignity, operations characterized by speed and compassion, transparent evaluations, and improvements based on shared learning.
Keywords: Buddhist integration, network collaboration, flood crisis alleviation

Introduction

Flood disasters are among the most serious natural challenges worldwide, inflicting damage on life, property, economies, and societies with long-term consequences for communities. In Thailand, recurring floods stem from geographical features, seasonal monsoons, and inadequate water management. The central region, particularly Ayutthaya Province, has faced severe hardship, disrupting livelihoods and deepening household vulnerability (Marks, 2011). Addressing floods requires more than technical or engineering responses. Community-based strategies that incorporate cultural and spiritual dimensions are essential. Buddhist principles offer a framework for resilience and compassion.

The Sangahavatthu 4 (four bases of social solidarity: giving, kind speech, beneficial conduct, impartiality) promotes mutual support and interconnectedness, guiding community-based disaster management. These values align with modern approaches to social cohesion and highlight the role of religious institutions and monks in disaster relief and psychological healing (Darlington, 2012). From an organizational management view, the Deming Cycle or Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) provides a systematic model for continuous improvement. Rooted in Shewhart's scientific method and later refined by Deming, PDCA has

been widely applied in industry, education, and healthcare for iterative problem-solving (Moen & Norman, 2009; Taylor et al., 2013). Its integration into flood management enables stakeholders to plan interventions, implement actions, evaluate results, and adjust strategies. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs further explains human responses in crises, from survival and safety to belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). During floods, immediate needs such as food and shelter dominate, yet dignity, belonging, and psychological well-being are equally critical for recovery.

This study explores how Buddhist integration, combined with PDCA and Maslow's framework, can support affected populations through collaboration between public and private organizations in Ayutthaya. By linking ethical, managerial, and psychological dimensions, it proposes an integrative model for sustainable and compassionate disaster mitigation.

Research Objectives

1. To study the current conditions of flood crisis alleviation among the people under the operations of public and private network organizations in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.
2. To examine the factors influencing flood crisis alleviation among the people under the operations of public and private network organizations in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.
3. To propose an appropriate Buddhist-integrated model to serve as a guideline for alleviating flood crises among the people under the operations of public and private network organizations in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with greater emphasis placed on the qualitative component. The overall design followed an exploratory sequential design, in which qualitative findings informed the quantitative phase.

2. Population and Samples

Population: The study focused on residents in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province who were affected by recurring flood crises, specifically in Bang Ban District, Bang Sai District, Phak Hai District, and Sena District.

Sample: A total of 67,734 households in these flood-prone areas were identified as the sampling frame (Provincial Strategic and Information Group, 2022). Using Taro Yamane's formula, the study selected 400 households as the survey sample.

Key Informants: Nineteen individuals were purposively selected as key informants. They consisted of: 1. Buddhist scholars or practitioners, 2. Community leaders and local politicians, 3. Officials from government and private agencies involved in disaster management, and 4. Local residents in the affected areas.

3. Research Tools

Qualitative instruments:

In-depth interviews were conducted using purposive sampling. Two perspectives were emphasized: (1) practitioners/implementers, and (2) affected residents. The interviews followed a semi-structured format and were carried out face-to-face. A total of 19 key informants participated. Additionally, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with 9 experts from relevant fields.

Quantitative instruments:

A structured questionnaire was administered to 400 households. Respondents were required to be 18 years or older and residents of households affected by recurring floods, with one questionnaire completed per household. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) for all items was ≥ 0.80. A pilot test of 30 questionnaires was conducted in a similar, non-sample area. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded an overall coefficient of 0.928, indicating high reliability.

4. Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews, conducted at agreed times and locations, with both note-taking and audio recording used.

Quantitative data were gathered through the distribution of 400 questionnaires, all of which were returned, yielding a 100% response rate.

5. Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis and descriptive methods, supported by findings from the focus group discussion.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean) and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's correlation coefficient and stepwise regression hypothesis testing.

Research Results

The findings of this study are presented in line with the research objectives as follows:

1. General Conditions of Flood Crisis Alleviation The study revealed both strengths and areas for improvement in flood crisis alleviation, as seen from aid providers and

affected residents. Aid providers stressed the importance of systematic planning grounded in reliable data and inter-agency coordination. Their practices, such as risk assessments, emergency preparedness, and training programs for officials and volunteers, demonstrated a strong commitment to minimizing impacts. From the residents' perspective, ongoing support was recognized, yet concerns remained regarding ineffective warning systems and unequal access to relief in certain areas. They emphasized the need for long-term strategies adapted to the local context. Operationally, agencies consistently mobilized relief through cross-sector collaboration, but delays persisted due to infrastructural and transportation barriers. In terms of monitoring, while evaluation systems were in place, residents sought greater transparency and more accessible feedback mechanisms.

2. Factors Influencing Flood Crisis Alleviation

Analysis of 400 household surveys using descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and stepwise regression) indicated overall strong performance. All variables had mean scores above 3.6, while correlation coefficients exceeded 0.5 at a 0.01 significance level, confirming strong positive relationships. These findings highlight the influence of systematic planning, cooperation, and inclusiveness on effective flood crisis management.

Table 1 Mean Scores ($\bar{x}$), Standard Deviations (S.D.), and Evaluation of Network Organizations' Assistance during Flood Situations in terms of the Four Principles of Sangahavatthu 4.

Item	**Assistance of Network Organizations**	**Mean** ($\bar{x}$)	**S.D.**	**Interpretation**

	during Flood Crisis (Sangahavatthu 4)			
1	Dana (Generosity)	3.91	0.885	High
2	Piyavaca (Pleasant Speech)	4.04	0.861	High
3	Atthacariya (Helpful Conduct)	3.82	0.951	High
4	Samanattata (Equality and Empathy)	3.99	0.926	High
Total		**3.94**	0.825	High

Interpretation: The survey results indicate that the overall level of assistance provided by network organizations during flood crises—measured through the four principles of Sangahavatthu 4—was rated at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.94$ out of 5). This suggests that aid activities were perceived as meaningful, compassionate, and aligned with Buddhist ethical values, although room for further improvement remains in ensuring equity and timeliness.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis 1: The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) was 0.605, with $R^2 = 0.623$ and a standard error of 0.283, statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis 2: The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) was 0.595, with $R^2 = 0.598$ and a standard error of 0.610, also statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Interpretation: These results indicate that the combination of the Four Principles of Sangahavatthu and the

Deming Cycle (PDCA) can jointly predict the effectiveness of flood crisis alleviation among affected communities in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province, when examined through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The explanatory power was found to be 60.5% and 59.5%, respectively.

Overall Effectiveness of Network Organizations

Survey findings confirmed that the operations of network organizations were effective at a high level across three conceptual frameworks: Sangahavatthu 4: Mean = 3.94, indicating strong practices in generosity (dana), pleasant speech (piyavaca), helpful conduct (atthacariya), and equality (samanattata). Deming Cycle (PDCA): Mean = 3.89, reflecting systematic planning, implementation, monitoring, and continual improvement. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Mean = 3.68, suggesting that aid addressed multiple layers of human needs, ranging from basic survival to the enhancement of quality of life.

3. Development of the Buddhist-Integrated Model

By synthesizing both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher developed an integrated model entitled: "Buddhist Integration for Flood Crisis Alleviation".

This model combines the Four Principles of Sangahavatthu, the PDCA cycle, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs into a relational structure (Integrated Framework) that can be applied at both the community and organizational levels. Planning (Plan): Grounded in an understanding of basic physiological and safety needs, ensuring preparedness and systematic allocation of resources. Implementation (Do): Conducted with generosity (dana) and collaboration, facilitated by compassionate communication (piyavaca) and proactive helpful actions (atthacariya). Monitoring (Check): Supported by technology, transparency, and inclusive participation to ensure accountability and responsiveness.

Improvement (Act): Emphasizing equality and solidarity (samanattata), while adapting systems to enhance long-term resilience.

Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing: The integration of Buddhist ethics, quality management processes, and motivational theory fosters an effective and holistic approach to flood crisis alleviation, encompassing systemic efficiency, social cohesion, and human motivation.

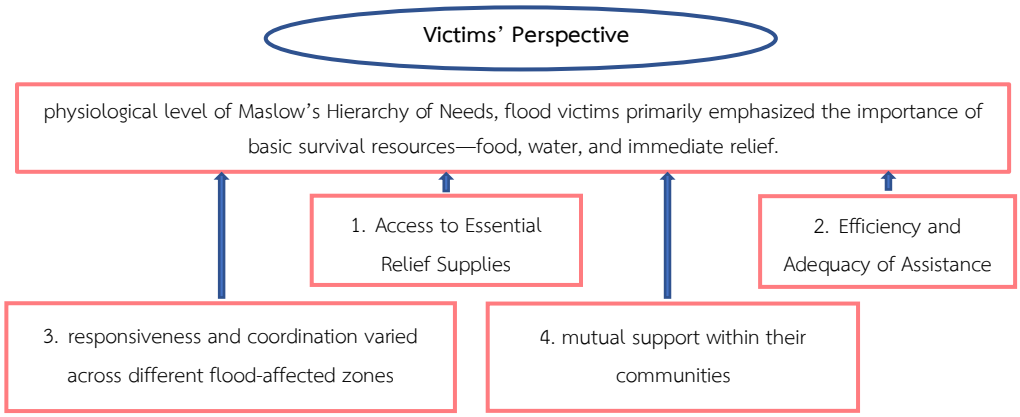


Figure 1 Victims' Perspective and Integrated Framework

Figure 1 summarizes the interview findings concerning the physiological dimension (Physiological Needs) from the perspective of flood victims. While immediate access to food, drinking water, and shelter was emphasized, respondents also reflected that effective communication and opportunities to participate in planning enhanced their sense of dignity, motivation, and self-development. This indicates that disaster management must go beyond material relief, incorporating psychosocial support and inclusive participation.

From the integrated perspective, the research identifies that Sangahavatthu 4 (principles of generosity, kind speech, beneficial action, and impartiality) functions as an ethical

mechanism; the Deming Cycle (PDCA) serves as a managerial mechanism; and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs operates as a motivational mechanism. Together, these frameworks interact dynamically to create a human-centered disaster management system.

The synthesis of both victims' and aid providers' perspectives highlights four key elements of integration: Planning (Plan) must be rooted in basic human needs, drawing upon accurate data and ensuring fairness in resource allocation. Implementation (Do) requires both speed and efficiency in operations, combined with compassionate communication even under high-risk conditions. Checking (Check) should ensure transparency and accountability, with communication channels that are genuinely accessible to all, particularly vulnerable groups. Action/Improvement (Act) entails continuous learning from crises, empowering communities to engage in policy processes with dignity and agency.

Discussion

General Context of Flood Crisis Alleviation: The study highlights that pre-disaster planning is a crucial foundation for effective flood crisis alleviation. Relief providers emphasized pre-assessment of risks, training of personnel, and systematic resource allocation, reflecting a strong commitment to structured management. This corresponds with Supachai Nukaew (2021), who argued that integrating Buddhist principles into planning fosters sustainable mechanisms of assistance. Nevertheless, disaster victims pointed out significant limitations in planning, particularly concerning communication, evacuation points, and inefficient early warning systems. Communities expressed an expectation for the development of long-term systemic approaches. This aligns with Thadet Srisawat (2022), who

emphasized flexible management systems grounded in reliable data. Moreover, technology is increasingly being applied to enhance accountability systems with a citizen-centered approach. Proactive planning and the creation of collaborative networks were also observed among relief providers.

Factors Influencing Flood Crisis Alleviation: Findings reveal that Sangahavatthu 4 (the Four Bases of Social Harmony) and Deming's PDCA cycle significantly influenced the alleviation of flood crises across multiple dimensions, especially when aligned with the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. For instance, dana (charitable giving), atthacariya (altruistic conduct), and samanattata (equitable participation) enhanced safety, trust, and motivation in recovery processes, addressing fundamental needs described by Maslow (1943). Supporting evidence can be found in the works of Veera Akkajitto (2022), Sorawichai (2022), and Sutin Yonsapsiri (2018), which indicate that applying the PDCA cycle alongside Buddhist principles strengthens community-based collaboration models. Notably, models such as the BTF (Ban–Temple–School) initiative have demonstrated how integrating Buddhist ethics with systematic processes builds resilience. This is consistent with Sanoh Mahattanadul et al. (2012), who proposed the use of Brahmavihara 4 together with PDCA to enhance psychological resilience and motivation.

Proposed Buddhist Integrative Model: This research proposes a Buddhist integrative model for flood crisis alleviation that synthesizes the Sangahavatthu 4, PDCA cycle, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The model reflects the complex interplay between humanitarian expectations and systemic management in disaster contexts. Conceptually, it combines: Systemic mechanisms (PDCA),

Ethical frameworks (Sangahavatthu 4), Motivational psychology (Maslow, 1943).

At the planning stage, relief providers prioritized accurate data collection, risk assessment, and systematic organization to address safety needs. The integration of dana and atthacariya ensured that actual necessities of victims were respected (Nukaew, 2021). At the implementation stage, compassion, equality, and structured coordination were crucial, especially communication through piyavaca (kind speech), inclusion of vulnerable groups, and dignified assistance. This corresponds with Maslow's esteem needs and aligns with the work of Krisada Sumedho (2022), who emphasized deep understanding of community suffering. At the evaluation stage, allowing communities to participate in monitoring and expressing their voices enhanced transparency and a sense of ownership. The Buddhist values of atthacariya and samanattata strengthened participatory accountability. Finally, the improvement stage ensured sustainability by learning from outcomes, adjusting strategies, providing education, and fostering networks. This reflects the highest level of Maslow's framework (self-actualization) not merely through material aid but by offering opportunities for development and restoring dignity in life (Mahattanadul et al., 2012). Overall, the Buddhist integrative model not only resonates with established Buddhist scholarship but also demonstrates applicability in modern disaster management frameworks that require attention to psychological and humanistic dimensions (Aditep Pinyakasem, 2022).

Knowledge Derived from the Research

From the research findings, knowledge can be synthesized into a holistic system, illustrated in Figure 2, which integrates the ethical concepts of Buddhism with

modern management mechanisms and Maslow's psychological theory. This integration consists of three key aspects: 1) Three-Tiered Integration System: The linkage of the Deming Cycle (PDCA) with the Four Principles of Sangahavatthu provides each stage of the cycle with an ethical foundation. For instance: Plan corresponds to dana (generosity), emphasizing equitable allocation of fundamental resources. Do corresponds to piyavaca (kind speech), highlighting the role of gentle and reassuring communication. Check corresponds to atthacariya (beneficial conduct), ensuring monitoring is oriented toward the benefit of others. Act corresponds to samanattata (impartiality), supporting improvement through

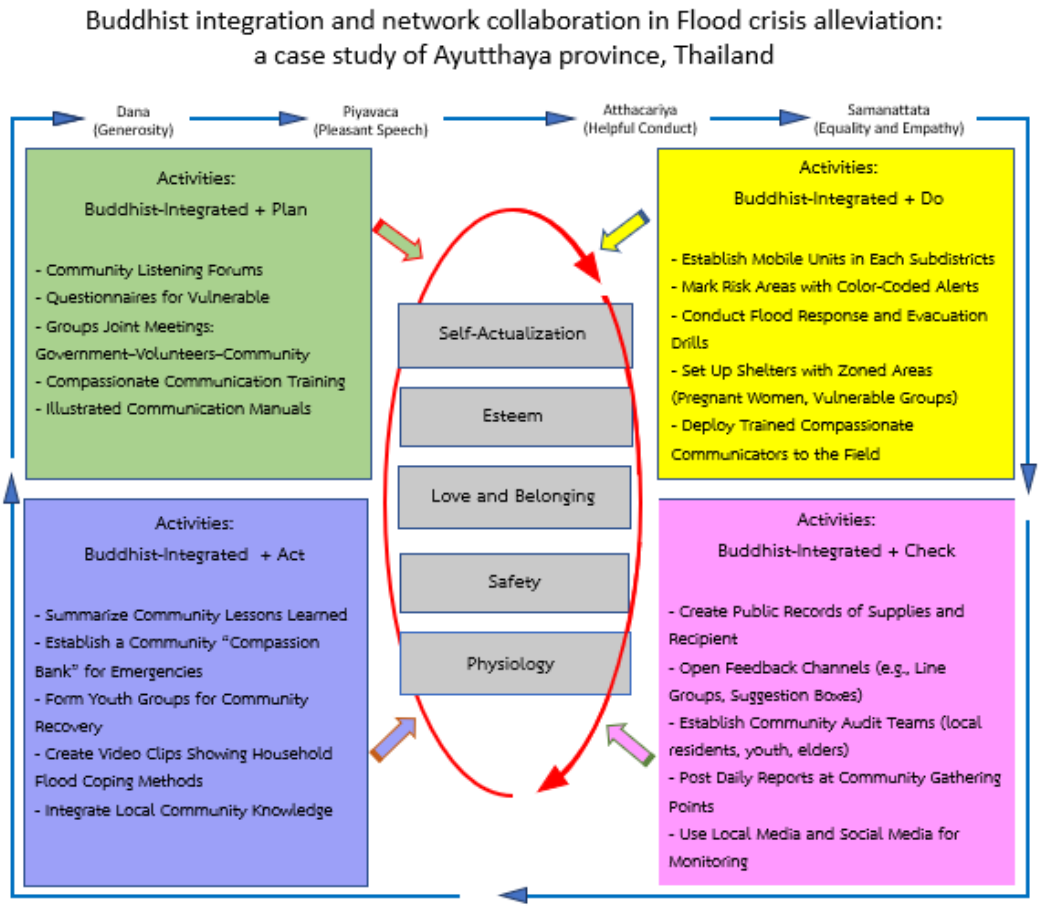


Figure 2 Knowledge Derived from the Research

equality and inclusiveness. Such integration enables disaster management processes to be not only systematic but also human-centered and ethically reliable. 2) Responding to Human Needs in Hierarchical Order: By linking PDCA and Sangahavatthu with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the model demonstrates that disaster response should address human needs in sequence and beginning with physiological requirements such as food, water, and shelter, moving toward safety and belonging, and ultimately supporting

dignity, esteem, and self-actualization. 3) Movement from External to Internal, and from Internal to External: The model illustrates how external systems (such as PDCA) must be driven by internal virtues (such as Sangahavatthu) in order to ensure ethically grounded disaster management. At the same time, people's motivation for recovery is stimulated by compassionate and understanding assistance, thereby empowering them to restore themselves. This synthesis can be grouped into four essential domains: Efficiency of planning, Operational capacity, Transparency in monitoring, Continuous development and improvement

Activities within each domain are designed to connect both the structural dimension of management and the ethical consciousness of all stakeholders involved.

Recommendations

1. Policy Recommendations 1) Government agencies should incorporate the Four Principles of Sangahavatthu into training programs for local leaders. 2) A Buddhist-integrated PDCA system should be implemented for flood preparedness planning in each locality. 3) The role of Buddhist monks should be promoted as "harmonizers of hearts", bridging organizations and communities during times of crisis.

2. Practical Recommendations 1) Practitioners should cultivate skills in reassuring speech and genuine giving, beyond merely following technical procedures. 2) Networks of "communities of Dhammic giving" should be developed to strengthen the long-term resilience of local communities. 3) Joint workshops involving government, private organizations, and communities should be organized to apply integrative thinking tools in disaster management.

3. Suggestions for Future Research 1) Study the interconnections among social, economic, and psychological

factors influencing community recovery after flooding. 2) Develop digital resource management strategies, including real-time monitoring systems, to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources.

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Contextual Intimacy and Trust in Volunteer Probation Officers: A Social Capital Analysis of Community-Based Corrections*

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Abstract

This research article investigates contextual intimacy and trust in Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) within the framework of social capital theory. The study specifically analyzes how this intimacy and trust are expressed and function within the probation system, using social capital as the central theoretical lens to explain the dynamics of these relationships. The research employed a qualitative methodology utilizing a case study approach based on fieldwork, which emphasizes the interpretation of social

* * This paper is a part of research entitled "The Social Force Development to Create a Mechanism to Drive the Civic Probation Center"

phenomena. The units of analysis comprised 10 VPOs, 10 professional probation officers, and 12 probationers, totalling 32 participants from three provinces: Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Saraburi, and Samut Prakan. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation, supplemented by an interview guide and validated via a data source triangulation process before undergoing content analysis and presentation through descriptive narration. The findings reveal that the trust garnered by VPOs can be categorized into three main dimensions of social capital: *Bonding Social Capital*, characterized by stable relationships with relatives/neighbours, which enables VPOs to be trusted counsellors and helps reduce stigma. *Bridging Social Capital*, derived from continuous participation in community groups, which allows VPOs to serve as a bridge connecting probationers to external resources. *Linking Social Capital*, stemming from official governmental recognition and the acquisition of social status, which enhances VPOs' credibility. Furthermore, the study found that such intimacy is accompanied by challenges and risks that impede the system, particularly the issue of normative role conflict. This conflict may lead to the negligent non-reporting of minor offenses to preserve personal relationships, and carries the risk of privacy violation and re-stigmatization. Consequently, the research proposes policy recommendations to evaluate the social network potential of VPOs during the recruitment process and to establish impartial guidelines to maintain a balance between intimacy and professional supervision.

Keywords: Contextual Intimacy, Trust, Volunteer Probation Officers, Social Capital, Informal Social Control

Introduction

The probation system is considered a cornerstone of rehabilitation within the criminal justice process. Its primary objective is to focus on behavioral modification of offenders within their actual community environment, enabling them to return to normal, constructive lives and prevent recidivism. Probation is fundamentally based on the concept that offenders commit mistakes or lapses often caused by complex social and environmental factors. Therefore, sustainable remediation necessitates collaboration from all sectors of society. However, state bureaucracies frequently face resource constraints, particularly concerning the number of professional Probation Officers (POs). The number of POs is often insufficient to adequately supervise the continuously increasing number of probationers. Furthermore, limitations in the reporting process restrict the POs' ability to reach all probationers effectively, and the frequency of contact is often insufficient to build deep relationships and understand individual-level problems. In the Thai context, the Probation Act B.E. 2559 (2016) provides a mechanism allowing the Director-General of the Department of Probation to appoint Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) to assist POs in probation operations. In 2021, a policy was introduced to establish Community Probation Centres in qualified communities. This represents a crucial strategy to expand the state's capacity to reach grassroots communities, making VPOs vital "human resources" for linking offenders back to the community and bridging the sense of alienation between professional POs and the community. What distinguishes VPOs and makes them similarly effective to state-employed POs is a unique characteristic termed "contextual intimacy and trust." This

attribute is not derived from legal authority or specialized qualifications but from the fact that VPOs are an integral part of the same social structure and relational networks as the probationers. This inherent intimacy forms the basis for "thick trust," which is essential for the delicate mission of rehabilitating offenders who are undergoing probation and share daily life within the community and society.

Moreover, the operation of VPOs within the community represents a complex social phenomenon demonstrating that Informal Social Control, relying on community norms and relationships, can be a powerful and accessible mechanism for crime management and rehabilitation, complementing the formal power of the state alone. This research article, therefore, aims to apply in-depth analytical principles to understand how "contextual intimacy and trust among VPOs operating within Community Probation Centres" are manifested and what functional roles they play in the adaptation of the probation process and social stability. The analysis employs a social relationship-focused theoretical approach, specifically Social Capital, as the core analytical framework. The researchers anticipate that the findings will lead to policy recommendations for the Department of Probation, Ministry of Justice, to improve the VPO recruitment, selection, and development process. This improvement would prioritize the evaluation of "social networks and the potential to build social capital" over solely formal qualifications. Additionally, it aims to enhance the effectiveness of Community Probation Centers by enabling them to appropriately and sustainably utilize VPOs for their missions.

Literature

Analyzing the dynamics of intimacy and trust in Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) requires a conceptual framework capable of explaining the value of relationships within social networks, particularly theories focusing on community-level interactions.

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital, as conceptualized by Robert Putnam (1995) and James Coleman (1988), refers to the features of social organizations-such as networks, norms, and social trust-that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital can be divided into two main types directly relevant to the role of VPOs: Bonding Social Capital: This denotes strong ties between individuals within homogeneous groups or the same network. VPOs often reside in the same community as the probationers, creating "homophily" in terms of local dialect, socioeconomic status, or shared local life experiences. This type of relationship fosters in-group trust, which is a crucial mechanism enabling probationers to feel comfortable disclosing genuine problems and distress-a level of access often difficult for professional probation officers from outside the community. Bridging Social Capital: This refers to weak, diverse ties that connect heterogeneous groups. VPOs are expected to act as a bridge between the probationers (who are often a stigmatized group) and external resources, such as vocational training agencies, public health services, or the labor market. This is achieved using the VPOs' credibility as community members officially recognized by the state. Utilizing bridging capital helps close the gap and reduce the social obstacles probationers frequently face in accessing formal assistance.

Informal Social Control Theory

The researchers also consider Informal Social Control Theory, following the work of Hirschi (1969) and the extension by Sampson and Laub (1990) in Life-Course Theory. These theories indicate that social control can occur both formally (by police, courts, prisons) and informally (by family, neighbours, and the community). Contextual intimacy and trust are central to informal social control because continuous monitoring can function organically. This involves the ongoing observation of a probationer's daily life, rather than merely scheduled meetings. This control represents a softer intervention, including the use of social sanctions. If a probationer violates conditions or exhibits deviant behavior, peer pressure or informal reprimands can be employed. This mechanism is effective for behavioral modification in individuals who still maintain positive social bonds with the community (Braithwaite, 1989).

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative methodology, prioritizing the interpretation of social phenomena based on the Interpretivist paradigm. The study utilized a Case Study Approach based on fieldwork, which is a form of Empirical Social Research (Yin, 1994; Chai Podhisita, 2021) designed to understand the operational phenomenon of Community Probation Centers. The units of analysis included both individual and collective levels, comprising participants directly involved in the operation of the Community Probation Centers. The total sample included 32 individuals from three provinces: Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Saraburi, and Samut Prakan: Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs): 10 individuals, professional Probation Officers: 10 individuals, and probationers: 12 individuals. Participants were selected based on the criteria that they had been involved in the Civic Probation Center's operations for at least six months, were able to provide information, were currently active or involved as assigned, and voluntarily consented to participate under the principles of human research ethics. There were no restrictions based on gender, age, race, religion, or education level.

Data was collected in October 2025 using the following methods: In-depth Interviews: Conducted using an interview guide as an essential data collection tool and non-participant observation: used to gather contextual information. The accuracy of the data was verified using Data Source Triangulation (cross-checking information from different participant groups). The data was then processed and analyzed through Content Analysis. The analytical process involved several steps: Data Organization: Transcribing audio recordings, finalizing field notes, and digitizing the data. Data Display: Presenting the analytical results, focusing on the linkage, causality, and relationship of the data. And conclusion Drawing and Verification: Interpreting the findings and conducting verification to draw conclusions about the social phenomena. This step involved considering the relationships between various phenomena that reflect intimacy and trust in Volunteer Probation Officers to reach a final conclusion.

Results and discussion

The research findings are structured into two main components:

Key Characteristics of the Informants

The volunteer probation officers from 32 individuals directly involved in the operation of the Community Probation Centers across three provinces: Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Saraburi, and Samut Prakan. The informants consisted of 10 Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs), 10 Professional Probation Officers, and 12 Probationers. All participants were selected based on the following criteria: they had been actively involved in the Community Probation Center's operations for a minimum duration of six months, were currently fulfilling their duties

or were related to the center's assignments, were capable of providing relevant information, and voluntarily consented to participate in the research in accordance with the principles of human research ethics. The study placed no restrictive criteria on demographic factors such as gender, age, race, religion, or education level.

Characteristics	**Probation Officer (10 cases)**	**Volunteer Probation Officers (10 cases)**	**Probationers (12 cases)**
Gender	4 Females, 6 Males	4 Females, 6 Males	12 Males
Age	27-56 years old	30-83 years old	30-71 years old
Level of Education	BA., MA.	Secondary education, MA.	Secondary education, BA.
Experiences	6 months – 5 years	6 months – 10 years	6 - 12 months

Contextual Intimacy and Trust in Volunteer Probation Officers through the Social Capital Lens

Gaining trust is an essential prerequisite for Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) working in the community, as trust is a core component of Social Capital—the network of social relationships that allows individuals to benefit from interactions, such as receiving assistance and forgiveness. In the context of VPOs, social capital is therefore an effective tool for reintegrating offenders into the community. The research findings indicate that the social capital relevant to the VPOs' duties can be categorized into five main issues, detailed as follows:

Trust Gained from Relatives and Neighbours: Bonding Social Capital

Bonding Social Capital is defined as a sense of allegiance derived from **strong, stable ties** among individuals who share similar values, norms, or social backgrounds. This type of capital typically originates from kinship, family, or close neighbors and is often **inward-looking**, primarily seeking benefits for members of the same group. The resulting form of trust is **thick trust**, generated by familiarity, shared experience, and a collective sense of duty. Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) working within their own community leverage their pre-existing credibility as local residents—a manifestation of **homophily** in close-knit societies—to build this bonding social capital. The inherent trust granted by kinship and mutual reliance in these communities allows VPOs to supervise probationers more effectively than external state officials, as they are perceived as **part of the family and the in-group**. Moreover, when VPOs solicit cooperation from probationers or community members for rehabilitation activities, they often receive strong compliance. Refusal to cooperate is interpreted as neglecting the strong ties and reciprocal obligations within the network. Therefore, participation signifies respect for mutual bonds rather than mere compliance with a formal order.

Crucially, VPOs function as **trusted counselors**. The profound intimacy fostered by Bonding Social Capital encourages probationers to open up about personal life problems, stress, or seek advice. As individuals who share a similar background and cultural context, VPOs possess a better understanding of the issues, leading to more effective

counseling and easier acceptance of guidance. Furthermore, the VPO's role as a relative or good neighbor helps **dissolve social barriers** between the offender and the community. This encourages the community to view the probationer through the lens of kinship and group membership rather than solely as an offender, thereby **reducing prejudice and stigma**. The success of offender rehabilitation is thus rooted in a strong foundation of close individual-level bonding, supported by the statement from a 48-year-old male Probation Officer:

> *"...The VPO is in the same area as the probationer. They are closer and know each other better than us. Besides, their status as an elder allows them to have a better way of speaking to the probationer than us, who tend to speak and rely more on the law..."*

This perspective from the male Probation Officer aligns with the sentiments of a 70-year-old male Volunteer Probation Officer with nearly a decade of experience, who stated:

> *"... When I go out to visit homes, I talk to the probationer's parents, saying that the reason I'm here to follow up is because I want to see their family happy. I don't have a son, so I consider this young person as a son or grandchild that I have the privilege of looking after. If your family is happy, I'm happy too..."*

Participation in Groups and Communities: Bridging Social Capital

Bridging Social Capital connects the gaps between individuals or groups that are separated by differences in values, norms, or social affiliations. These relationships are typically characterized by numerous weak ties that weave

the broader society together. Bridging capital is vital for providing new information and establishing generalized reciprocity—a willingness to help individuals who are not close contacts. As Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) expand their roles from supervising probationers within homes to engaging in continuous public activities and community groups, their status evolves from mere neighbors to recognized community figures or accepted activists. This elevated status makes them crucial bridging mechanisms, thereby establishing a broader level of trust. By becoming members or actively participating in various community groups—such as Sub-District Quality of Life Development Committees, District Quality of Life Development Committees, or the Buddhist Clergy—VPOs generate open social capital. They leverage these extensive networks to mobilize resources, including community activities/employment opportunities, financial capital, and knowledge, to assist probationers. This function is perceived as creating a public benefit, solidifying the VPO's role as a vital link between the marginalized probationer and external community resources.

Furthermore, this community and group participation is essential for enabling different groups to work together. In the context of probation, VPOs must function as a **bridge** between the majority community and the probationers. By acting as a trusted intermediary for all parties, VPOs facilitate the easier acceptance of probationers into broader social activities, such as religious events, and contribute to the creation of a community atmosphere conducive to the probationers' behavioral change. Continuous engagement in groups and communities, alongside the consistent demonstration of **virtue, self-sacrifice, and integrity**, universally affirms the VPO's credibility. This broad

acceptance encourages the community to be more willing to assist and support the Department of Probation's mission, as reflected in the words of a female Volunteer Probation Officer:

> *"The work of the Community Probation Center is community work that mobilizes people with sincere intentions to collaborate so that our community can be happy. Many agencies cooperate according to their knowledge, ability, and roles, but they can still fulfill their own specific missions as well..."*

Linkage with State Institutions: Linking Social Capital

Linking Social Capital is a concept developed from both Bonding and Bridging Capital, referring to the vertical relationships that connect individuals or community groups with formal institutions of power (e.g., government agencies, national organizations, or the State). This type of capital creates leverage and enables the community to access resources, opportunities, and legal endorsements originating from these institutions. The role of the Volunteer Probation Officer (VPO) as a State representative in the community establishes this Linking Social Capital, which significantly enhances their status and operational authority. This is materialized through: Legal Legitimacy: VPOs are officially appointed by the Director-General of the Department of Probation and operate as assistants to professional probation officers under the Probation Act B.E. 2559 (2016). They possess an identification card and a specific uniform, granting them legal legitimacy to access probationers and investigate facts. The resulting trust is therefore not merely personal trust but trust in the system and the State's authority. Access to State Services: VPOs serve as a crucial link

between the community and the Community Probation Center/Department of Probation. This provides the community with a channel to request rehabilitation assistance and enables probationers to access their rights and State social services. Social Status and Honor: VPOs also receive social recognition and honor. The potential to receive awards at various levels (community, district, province, and state) or even royal decorations for public service effectively converts social capital into status and honor. The honor conferred by the State, in turn, reinforces both Bonding and Bridging Capital, making neighbors and community members proud and more cooperative with the VPO, as supporting the VPO is seen as officially supporting an individual recognized by the State.

Structural Dynamics of Intimacy and Trust

The structural dynamics of intimacy and trust are critically important for understanding the research topic. The establishment of intimacy and trust in the probation context is not automatic but results from the structural process by which Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) are "embedded" within the community system through three distinct mechanisms:

1. Residential Embeddedness: VPOs and probationers often reside within the same geographical area (neighborhood), fostering physical and social familiarity. This shared residency provides VPOs with the legitimacy to intervene in the probationer's life under the implicit norms of neighborly care. Conversely, professional probation officers from state agencies are frequently viewed as "outsiders," which

inherently limits their access to information and their ability to forge cooperation.

2. Socio-Cultural Contextual Expertise: VPOs possess specialized knowledge of local culture, family structures, and the history of the probationer's conflicts. This deep, localized information is often restricted from professional probation officers. A VPO's ability to understand the Context of Deviance—such as linking the cause of drug addiction to household economic problems or family conflict—allows them to provide counseling and design rehabilitation programs that are precisely tailored to the realities of the local area.
3. Multi-Role Interaction: The trust cultivated by VPOs is not derived solely from their role as a probation volunteer, but often from their pre-existing multiple roles within the community, such as village head, sub-district administrative organization (SAO) member, retired teacher, community leader, or community committee member. This multi-role status enhances their credibility and self-legitimacy, making it easier for probationers to accept assistance from the VPO than to comply with orders from a state official.

Challenges and Risks Arising from Excessive Intimacy

While intimacy and trust are valuable resources, the absence of proper oversight can lead to risks and operational impediments that negatively affect the probation system. These issues include:

Normative Role Conflict

Role conflict for Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) often stems from the tension between the norms of neighborliness—which emphasize compassion and protection—and the norms of being a State representative—which emphasize reporting and law enforcement (Sieh, 2013). Excessive intimacy can lead the VPO to underreport minor offenses to preserve the vital social relationships (Bonding Capital), constituting a manifest dysfunction for the system's objective of controlling deviance. A professional Probation Officer remarked on this issue:

> *"…There have been gray areas with VPOs who completed reporting forms as if the probationer attended the scheduled check-in. Some did this because the probationer was a close acquaintance. In such cases, that VPO would fail the annual performance evaluation and their role as a Volunteer Probation Officer would be terminated..."*

Privacy Breach and Re-Stigmatization

The VPO's embedded status provides easy access to the probationer's personal information. If this information is unintentionally disseminated within the broader community (Latent Dysfunction), it can lead to a privacy breach and, more critically, re-stigmatization by the community itself (Clear, 2007). Instead of leading to social integration, intimacy can thus become a mechanism for informal social exclusion, endangering the entire rehabilitation effort.

Lack of Professional Neutrality

Intimacy may lead to the overuse of personal discretion in performing VPO duties. VPOs may show a tendency toward selective treatment based on personal relationships, such as leniently relaxing conditions for a relative or close neighbour, or being overly strict with individuals with whom they have a prior personal conflict. This lack of professional neutrality results in inconsistent probation standards and undermines the overall credibility of the mechanism in the eyes of other probationers.

Conclusion

The research findings, focusing on Contextual Intimacy and Trust in Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) through the Social Capital lens, established that trust is the critical condition for the effective performance of VPOs. This effectiveness can be analyzed across five main aspects of social capital and structural dynamics. The study found that the trust in VPOs is primarily rooted in Bonding Social Capital, characterized by stable and strong ties. VPOs, as community members, leverage their pre-existing credibility and act as trusted counselors, enabling them to access the true, underlying problems of probationers—access that professional probation officers from outside the community find restricted. This kinship and neighborly relationship forms the essential foundation that encourages probationers to feel close enough to disclose personal stressors and stories, serving as a vital mechanism for dissolving social barriers and thus reducing community prejudice and stigma. Secondly, Bridging Social Capital functions to connect the gaps between different social groups. VPOs utilize continuous participation in community groups to elevate their status from neighbor to recognized activist, establishing an open social network. This enables them to serve as a bridge connecting probationers to external resources and facilitates the probationers' acceptance into broader social activities. Thirdly, Linking Social Capital is established through a vertical relationship connecting VPOs to State institutions. Their formal registration as State operatives, including uniform and identification, grants them legal legitimacy. The trust they receive is thus not merely personal but a trust in the system and the authority of the State.

Beyond the dimensions of social capital, the findings demonstrate that this intimacy and trust are products of three structural dynamics: Residential Embeddedness, which legitimizes VPOs' intervention under the norms of neighborly care; Socio-Cultural Contextual Expertise, which allows them to accurately understand the context of deviance and precisely design rehabilitation efforts; and Multi-Role Interaction, where their credibility is reinforced by existing community roles, such as community leadership. However, the research revealed that excessive intimacy brings challenges and risks that impede the probation system. The primary problem identified is Normative Role Conflict—the tension between the VPO's role as a friend/neighbor and that of a State representative. This conflict can lead to the underreporting of minor offenses to preserve social relationships, alongside the risks of privacy breach and re-stigmatization if sensitive information is broadly disseminated. Furthermore, the issue of Lack of Professional Neutrality arises from the overuse of personal discretion, leading to the risk of inconsistent standards and undermining the entire mechanism's credibility.

Consequently, policy recommendations for development call for mechanisms to enhance VPO efficacy and reduce risks by focusing on professional operational frameworks and human resource management. Specifically, the Department of Probation, Ministry of Justice, should revise recruitment processes to prioritize the evaluation of social networks and the potential to build social capital over solely formal qualifications. Additionally, clear operational manuals and supervision guidelines are necessary to manage role conflict. Specialized training should be provided to help VPOs establish clear boundaries between their roles as neighbors/relatives and as State agents, setting clear criteria to reduce personal discretion and the risk of negligent underreporting. The key academic recommendations from this research suggest expanding the scope of social capital and informal social control theories within the Thai probation context. This includes conducting quantitative studies to statistically confirm the relationship between different social capital dimensions and probation outcomes, thus achieving broader empirical validation. Crucially, in-depth studies are needed on the structural dynamics of intimacy, particularly the Multi-Role Interaction phenomenon, to analyze how pre-existing social roles interact with their role as State representatives and how this influences probationers' confidence in the justice process.

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Thai Political Culture and Democracy Development in Buddhist Community

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Abstract

The objectives of this article are to propose the concept of Thai Political Culture and democracy development. Political culture is the attitudinal pattern and personal behavior responding to the political system arisen from learning, belief, value and political socialization from various social institutes, such as family, education, religion, mass media and political and administrative institutions etc. Democracy development is to develop Thai political culture to have confidence and faith in the principles of equality, freedom and respect of the democratic administrative rules and regulations, political activities participations, knowing and understanding with creative reasoning. Democracy is the right, not duty and freedom, not oppression, with limitation. Leaders must abide by the rules of laws, create social good governance to develop democracy to be virtuous with virtues coinciding with the way of life, cultural, social and Thailand political pattern.

Keywords: Political Culture; Democracy Development; Buddhist Community.

Introduction

Since Thailand had changed the administration from the absolute monarchical to democratic system with the King

as the figure Head in 2475 B.E. Majority of Thai people understood the meaning and expression of attitude, belief, and feeling of political ideology, standard of personal political norm. Politics sets Thai personal behavior and political culture with the dimension of democracy resulting the foundations and development of democracy in Thailand moving so slow and interrupted periodically. One important reason was that Thai people think that politics is far away, not personal business as well as being tire of some political crisis happening now and then especially the political conflicts in the last decade resulting severe desegregation between the supporting groups and the group with different political belief. (Social and Population Research Institute, Mahidol University, 2556)

Political Culture

Political Culture comes from two separated words; culture and Politics. Each word has different meanings. Culture indicates the growth, nourishment, orderliness and fine ethical morality of people. Culture is regarded as the norm that human created and accepted from long learning process and continuously practiced. It appeared to be prominent identity identifying growth and nourishment and social orderliness. Culture is the pattern of human behavior, thought, belief, values and attitudes, together becoming the life pattern of social civilization. It becomes the thinking pattern of living, working, expression, and communication and interrelations exchange. The mentioned way of life is the life pattern or way of life of human beings that the majority society accepted and continuously practiced and it can be changed as the time passed by or the new way is found for solving problems and responding to the needs of society better and members of societies preferred(Sanya Sanyavivat, 2532: 182)

Politics is the power or authority to share or divide natural resources for the highest benefits of all people. That is to justly determine, to enforce social rules, regulations and laws responding to people's happy benefits equally with fare shares.

Political culture is the individual norms towards politics and political organizations arising from political socialization in families, peer groups, schools, career groups, religions and mass media transforming onto social norms, belief, behaviour, feeling, attitudes, and values. So the way of belief and values which derived from the past are regarded as an important political and administrative pillar of country.

In Conclusion, Political culture combines the concepts of *culture* and *politics*. Culture represents the learned and practiced norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors that create social order and civilization. Politics refers to the fair distribution of power and resources for the benefit of all. Political culture, therefore, reflects individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward politics, shaped by socialization through family, education, religion, and media. These inherited beliefs and values form a vital foundation for a nation's political and administrative systems.

Concepts of Political Culture

The system of belief, value, attitude and norms has effects on the political pattern. Political culture is the individual thinking and this thinking is used by the individuals to just the political events or political acknowledgement. The acknowledgement is expressed in forms of political expression or election voting, protests, opposition or conforms. Political culture is in forms of governments of every country. The differences are only by the belief, values arisen from political socialization

according to the environment, society, economy and political system.

Political culture that can support the democratic political system must also be the democratic political culture (Polsak Jirakraisiri, 2524: 20) Political culture created by human is not created by instinct, but by agreement of members of one society or with societies in vicinity to come to an agreement on one system which is called "symbolic system"(Amara Pongsapit, 2551: 25) which is the pattern of attitude and this attitude creates political activities(Gbriel A. Almond and G. B. Powell, 1967 : 903-905) Political culture is the culture that dominates societies, the culture that determines the values and the norms for political debates and decision, the fruit of ideology of governors and inheritors. Governors always use political culture to create political justice (Ruengvit Kasemsuwan, 2549: 236-237)

In Conclusion, Political culture consists of beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms that shape political behavior and systems. It guides how individuals perceive and respond to political events through actions like voting or protesting. Formed through socialization, it varies by environment, economy, and politics. A democratic system requires a democratic political culture based on shared social agreements that influence governance, decision-making, and political justice.

Importance of Political Culture

Political Culture is one part of cultures that are the fruits of knowledge, thoughts and political belief that descended from generations to generations through social or political socialization in the important institutions such as families, educational institutes, religious institutes, political and administrative institutions, mass media, and entertainment institutes. Culture prevails only in human

society. Culture creates orderliness and social unity. So culture plays the important roles as follows:

1) Political culture is the important factor that supports the political and administrative justice by obeying orders and abiding by the laws resulting the social orderliness.

2) Political culture is the important factor that encourages the political change

Jack Panchupet(Jack Panpet, 2550: 186-187) proposed that political participatory behavior of people in each country are different even though those countries have the same political systems due to the political culture derived from different way of political socialization which is regarded as an important tool to the change of the political culture in each country.

In Conclusion, Political culture, inherited through generations via institutions like family, education, religion, and media, promotes social order and unity. It supports justice by encouraging obedience to laws and plays a key role in driving political change. Differences in political participation among nations stem from variations in political socialization shaping each country's unique political culture.

Democratic Political Culture

Tinnapan Nakata had concluded 8 types of democratic political cultures as:

1. Confidence and faith in democratic form of government

2. Hold to and believe in the importance, dignity, equality and freedom of individuals

3. Respect the rules and regulations of democratic form of government

4. Interested in political and administrative participation

5. Being participants in political and administrative activities

6. Being optimistic and trust in human fellows

7. Reasonable criticism in creative ways

8. No sense of the dictator's mind.

Vichai Tansiri proposed that society misunderstands all along that election is the democracy. In fact, election is only one form of political participation. Democracy depends on people's political culture in the areas of personal freedom, law obedience and law enforcement with equality. So Democracy development is to create political culture along with good constitution.

In Conclusion, Democratic political culture involves faith in democracy, respect for equality and freedom, adherence to laws, and active participation in governance. It encourages optimism, constructive criticism, and rejection of dictatorship. True democracy extends beyond elections, relying on citizens' moral responsibility, legal obedience, and equality supported by a strong constitutional framework.

Thai Political Culture

Thai political culture from past to present can be concluded as follows:

1. Authoritarian, Thai people like absolute authority

2. Boss and subordinate system. Majority of Thai people in the society belong to one or more groups. Leaders of the group must be charismatic and able to protect and be beneficial to the subordinates. In return, the subordinates support the boss.

3. Hold to persons rather than principles. Inter personal relations and personal help are still important in almost every activity.

4. Echelon or rank of inter personal relations in organization that creates inequality in right and freedom. Thai people regard that one must know one's status, high or low, not equal. Thais still addict to the birth dignity.

5. Freedom minded. Thai people love freedom, do not like to be under others' control resulting the lack of orderliness, rules and regulations in the way of living

6. Hold to the old tradition. Majority of Thai people still believes and practice according to the old traditions and cultures Peace loving and compromising. Thais love peace, do not like Violence. Political change is carried out peacefully, step by step, avoiding conflict, patience to unfair advantages. (Tinnapan Nakata, 2554: 36-41)

In the past Thai political culture was seldom expressed. But now more and more political activities are expressed, resulting the economic and political changes such as independence, tolerance and power of assimilation.

In Conclusion, Thai political culture is historically authoritarian, emphasizing charismatic leaders, hierarchical relationships, and personal loyalty over principles. Thais value freedom, tradition, peace, and compromise, often favoring gradual, nonviolent political change. Recent years show increasing political expression, fostering independence, tolerance, and adaptability.

Thai Democratic Political Culture

Thai society is the agricultural society that still strictly holds to and practices the traditions. Thai social structure reflects the free and democratically behavior in the aspects of right, equality, privilege in some cases in some cases freedom without responsibility to institutions(Sombat Wogsrirat, 2550:67), changing in attitude and tradition of the way of life. But still told to the social echelon, accepting the authority from the higher ranks, confidence in person rather

than principles and compromising. Thai way of life and value socialization is clearly the indicators of Thai political culture which can be concluded as follows:

1. Seniority. Thai family traditions accept the authority of the seniors

2. Career base. Career base of Thai people is agriculture. People living separately. Political thoughts and culture were not accessible.

3. Genders. Differences between male and female have important parts in access to political objects. Research findings indicated that male youth in up-country understood political objects more than female youth (Sombat Wogsrirat, 2550:40), this indicated that male is more interested in political activities than female in political society.

4. Buddhism influence plays an important role to the political Thought. The Buddhist proverb that says "One is one own refuge" makes Thai good alone, not as a team. Also Buddhism teaches to be peaceful, harmonious, forgiveness and reasonable. Etc.

5. The term of democratic government is short. Coalition Government lack stability, resulting often elections. The coalition is for supporting the majority power, not for the coalition ideology (Air Marshall Pongsatorn Chaisen, 2558: 10)

In Conclusion, Thai democratic political culture reflects traditional agricultural society values, seniority, and respect for authority, with limited access to political knowledge. Gender and Buddhism influence political participation and thought, emphasizing peace, harmony, and individual responsibility. Frequent coalition governments and short terms affect political stability and democratic practice.

Thai Political Culture and the Method of Democracy Development

Thai Political Culture since Thailand changed from the absolute monarchical system to democratic system in the Buddhist Era 2475, there were often coup de ta all along since the last coup de ta by General Prayuth Chanocha, at present the head of National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) who seized power in 2557 B.E. Thai democracy is still "up and down" or still crippled. Many people suspected that for what reasons Thai politics is full of revolutions or coup de ta, even though Thailand has good constitutions and independent organizations that can check and cross check the state power and not practical and still the military seized the state power or coup de ta?

However, if we consider the Thai political culture we can see that it is opposite of the democratic political culture. Thai people still lack democratic political culture and understanding the democracy and still practice the Thai way of political practice that is the authoritative and patronage pattern, the old system that still plays a big role and still have influences on thought, belief and values in the way of life beyond the rules and regulations in the constitutions. For that reasons the Thai democracy is still up and down for the following reasons:

1. Lack of democratic principle. Thai people do not respect the right of others but demand the right for themselves

2. Still admiring the absolute power to manage the crisis and not believing in the open society system, preventing others from expressing different opinions, eager to check other's faults, but being afraid of being checked and trying to protect self and associates from being checked.

3. People by overall do not have political participation, still think that politics is the job of politicians, people have only duty to vote.

From the mentioned cases, Thai political culture is authoritative related to patronage system enrooted deeply in the Thais' conscience. Historically, Siam people did not request democracy by themselves. Thai government, either from election or from military coup de ta, has the same political culture. Corruption problem came from patronage system. Constitution stability problem from military seizing power came from authoritarian system. Constitutions were torn and rewritten time and time again, but the remaining phenomena in Thai society that is never changed, is that Thai people do not know the true principle of democracy. Bureaucratic system is for power seeking, desegregated, and attached to the political and higher institutions. Government officers are honored and praised with dignity. Administrative role and power remain at the top level, not empowered.

Thai democratic political culture indicated the dark power in different forms causing the political power is limited to only specific groups that have money and influential power deterring those knowledge and academic people from getting involved with politics. For this one of the reasons, it is difficult to encourage people to participate in politics.

Some researches indicated that Thai political culture does not encourage people to participate in politics. Thai people believed that politics and administration are the duties of some minority groups. Politics is clearly for the benefits from some strong groups to take advantages of other groups but still declaring that they do it for the benefits of the people. This kind of thought makes people not to have

faith and eagerness to participate in politics. The benefit exchange can be seen before and after election.

Cultural and religious factors are other cases that support democratic system. In some societies, social culture is the obstacle to democracy. Some parties said that culture and religion should not have any conditions to politics, only some political value orientation. Concerning this case, Anake Laotammatat, mentioned about the political culture regarding people "Thai people now a day are only the subjects, waiting for the merits handed down from the government and the authority. So Thai people should 1) have political participation, 2) stop being the subjects, congregate physical and mental power and energy and all resources to solve problems by their own ways". This way will have effect on the political culture.

In Conclusion, Thai political culture, rooted in authoritarianism and patronage, has hindered democratic development despite constitutions and independent institutions. Citizens often lack democratic understanding, political participation, and respect for others' rights, while power remains concentrated among elites. Cultural, religious, and historical factors reinforce dependence on authority, limiting grassroots involvement and perpetuating corruption. True democratic progress requires active citizen engagement and cultural transformation.

The way to develop the democracy

Democratic minds come from various institutions in society that socialize their minds in uniform such as families, schools, communities, work places and mass media. Democratic political system is one form of government that the power to manage the state power comes from the majority votes of people who own the sovereign power. People may use their power directly or through the

representatives. Democracy is an ideal stating that people in a nation together determine the laws and the state operation and determines people to have equal opportunities and yield their will.

Democracy is the right, not duty, freedom, not oppression that have privacy and give equal right and freedom. One cannot abuse the right and freedom of others. Right and duty respect by laws will re-enforce the democracy. For this reason, democracy development by the rules of laws will yield the effective democracy. The principle of people's power, right and freedom and equality must be by laws, not by personal authority. If people lack readiness in education, knowledge of politics, economy and responsibility as the owner of the power and the rulers in the democratic system lack political moral ethics, not holding to the benefits for people and nation and the government with majority votes lacks the rules of laws, this will lose equilibrium of the state power and people power becoming the majority dictator government. It is not good for the objectives of democracy. The balance of power between state and people, the social strength by the rules of laws are the ideal phenomenon of democracy (Air Mashall Pongsatorn Chaisen, 2558: 11)

Democracy development is to develop the way of life and political culture to encourage people to have the democratic minds, responsibility to the whole and the sense of ownership of the country and the country belongs to every citizen and social consciences.

Democracy will be flourishing when people listen to each other's' opinions to search the truth, accept the problem solving by peaceful means, with politeness, knowing how to forgive by the Buddhist society, give opportunity to show the responsibility to the society. Many academicians expressed their opinions about the ways of life and culture

according to Thai culture especially Buddhism as the guideline for living. Thailand can become the democratic country not because of only democratic form of government, but also to create democratic culture in daily life.

The components of Thai democracy in the present time consist of the right, freedom, equality, different opinion acceptance, responsibility to public, volunteering minds for the whole, participation, reconciliation, compromise and participation (Kanok Wongtrangan, 2537: 20)

How to create democracy in Buddhist Community

Buddhism is like the root of nationality and national identity socially, culturally and politically. Buddhism creates virtuous democracy and members of the society are good, moral, honest, intellectual and able to judge goodness and badness of people. Leaders must practice by the rules of laws and create the good governance in the society. Dhammadhipateyya or Righteous supremacy means practice by principles, reason, sincerity, righteousness and justice. Doing all administrative activities by the rules of laws, not by the worldly trends that might not be right, not be the righteous supremacy. Sometimes you may not like it. Dhammadhipateyya and Democracy in the Thai political context from the academicians' points of view indicated that Dhammadhipateyya supports democracy to be more justly practical. Dhammadhipateyya derives from Buddhism with the purposes of cultural, social and political alignment (Supote Boonviset and Praiwan kenprom, 2557:31).

It is the most appropriate to apply Dhammadhipateyya to develop democracy. Dhammadhipateyya is the firm foundation to support democracy to be secure, sustain, just, equal and should be applied in every organism from society, organizations, and unit of work, both state and private(Sangvorn Limtapanlop, 2559: 1).

Since Thailand has the democratic form of government with the King as the figure head. The democratic political concept should be in line with the 5 ways as sovereign power of the people, personal freedom, equality, the rules of laws and the government from general election. If leaders lack virtuous ethics and morality, no religion to hold on to, the power gain by the political ways might be used for the personal gain. Leaders of the country apply religious doctrine to formulate policies.

In Conclusion, Democracy develops through social institutions like family, school, and media that nurture democratic minds, responsibility, and respect for others' rights. True democracy balances state and citizen power under the rule of law, emphasizing freedom, equality, participation, and social responsibility. In Thailand, integrating Buddhist principles such as Dhammadhipateyya supports just, moral, and sustainable governance. Democracy flourishes when citizens practice ethical behavior, dialogue, compromise, and civic responsibility in daily life.

Conclusion

One can say that it is Opposite to the democratic political culture. Thai society still lacks good understanding of democratic principles and lacks democracy itself as the democratic ideology of the developed countries. Thai society still gets hold of the same old Thai culture. Every time the persons with power to write the constitutions always hide hidden agenda for power inheritance in the constitutions or finding the opportunity for selves or associates to interfere in the political arena. This article explores the relationship between Thai political culture and democratic development within the Buddhist community. It emphasizes that political culture—formed through attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors

toward politics—is shaped by social institutions such as family, education, religion, and the media. In Thailand, democracy development requires cultivating faith in equality, freedom, and lawful governance.

Since Thailand's transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional democracy in 1932, its democratic progress has been inconsistent. Many Thais still view politics as distant, while recurring crises and coups reveal a weak democratic foundation. Thai political culture remains influenced by authoritarianism, hierarchy, and patron-client relationships, where personal loyalty outweighs principles. Political culture, as the collective values and norms guiding political behavior, affects how citizens participate in governance. A truly democratic political culture includes trust in democratic institutions, respect for laws, equality, and open participation. However, in Thailand, democracy has often been equated merely with elections, rather than civic responsibility and moral governance. Historically, Thai political behavior has reflected six dominant traits: preference for authority, patronage systems, and personals over principle, social hierarchy, love of freedom without discipline, and respect for tradition. Although political participation is increasing, genuine democratic understanding remains limited.

Buddhism plays a major role in shaping Thai attitudes toward politics. The Buddhist principle of *Dhammadhipateyya* ("righteous supremacy")—governing by justice, morality, and reason—offers a moral foundation for virtuous democracy. Democratic governance, from this perspective, must balance individual rights with collective responsibility and moral integrity. Democracy flourishes when citizens act with compassion, tolerance, and mindfulness—qualities consistent with Buddhist teachings. Education, socialization, and ethical leadership are crucial to

building democratic consciousness. True democratic development thus requires integrating Buddhist ethics with democratic principles, ensuring that leaders follow the rule of law and citizens actively participate in governance with moral awareness. In conclusion, the article proposes that sustainable democracy in Thailand depends not only on political institutions but also on transforming Thai political culture. By applying Buddhist values such as justice, wisdom, and ethical governance, Thai democracy can evolve into a more stable, equitable, and spiritually grounded system.

The concept of authoritarian system related to patronage system is still alive and influential to political thought, belief, and values of Thai people in daily life beyond the contents of all constitutions.

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Overflowing Meanings in Ethnographic Photography: Reading Images of the Karen Community through Barthes's Semiotics (1975–2017)

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Abstract

This article analyses ethnographic photographs of the Karen community in Ban Dong, Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province, taken between 1975 and 2017, through Roland Barthes's framework of semiotics—particularly his concepts of *"Rhetoric of the Image"* and *"The Third Meaning."* The analysis of eleven photographs reveals three levels of meaning: **denotation**, which depicts everyday life, rituals, and the community's relationship with nature; **connotation**, which reflects communal identity, participation, and negotiation with state power; and **obtuse meaning**, which emerges through gestures, light and shadow, and compositional details that evoke emotional resonances beyond the photographer's intention. These photographs do more than document ethnographic realities; they function as **texts** that open interpretive spaces for viewers to construct new meanings according to their own contexts and experiences. The study demonstrates that ethnographic photography is more than a historical record—it is a medium that powerfully reflects the complexities of

relationships among community, state, and nature, as well as the social and cultural transformations of the Karen community over more than four decades.

Keywords: Obtuse Meaning; Ethnographic Photography; Karen; Roland Barthes

Reading Culture through Photography: Analytical Approaches and Applications

Reading culture through photographs is a process that integrates analytical interpretation, contextual understanding, and the use of modern technology. This process enables researchers to decode cultural meanings and extract historical insights from photographs, which reflect the complex relationships between society and visual representation.

Visual and Contextual Analysis: Photographs possess a unique capacity to permanently capture a moment in time, enabling researchers to examine and interpret the social and cultural contexts represented within them with precision and depth (Ferrarotti, 1993). As visual documents, photographs record social structures, everyday activities, cultural practices, and the dynamics of various social groups of their respective periods (Lopes, 2010). This static form of analysis allows for an understanding of the hidden cultural dimensions embedded within images. **Application of Digital Technology:** Technological advancements have significantly expanded the scope of photographic analysis. The application of deep learning models enables the efficient examination of large-scale historical image datasets by automatically classifying and contextualizing photographs, thereby reducing the need for intensive manual inspection (Stacchio et al., n.d.). Furthermore, the integration of visual and textual data allows researchers to identify cultural

influences on fashion and other social phenomena, providing deeper insights into the evolution of cultural patterns over time (Hsiao & Grauman, 2021).

In addition to technical analysis, qualitative approaches such as **photo-elicitation** play a crucial role in deepening cultural understanding. This technique employs photographs as stimuli for conversation and discussion, allowing research participants to articulate interpretations, share experiences, and convey meanings associated with the images in profound and reflective ways (Ndione & Rémy, 2018). This approach helps bridge the connection between images and complex cultural meanings. However, despite the valuable cultural insights that photographic analysis can provide, researchers must remain aware of its key limitations. These include the potential for misinterpretation or bias, as well as the challenges of constructing accurate contextual meanings when narratives or supplementary information are absent or unclear. Therefore, photographic analysis should be conducted with caution and with careful attention to the diverse historical and social contexts in which images are produced and interpreted.

Reading culture through photography is an interdisciplinary approach with the potential to reveal profound cultural and historical dimensions. The integration of qualitative analysis with advanced technological tools enhances the understanding of relationships between photographic images and their sociocultural contexts. However, interpretations must be carried out with critical awareness and sensitivity to the limitations of photographic sources in order to ensure credible and contextually grounded conclusions.

The Visual Semiotics of Roland Barthes: A Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Photographs

Rhetoric of the Image

Barthes (1977) developed a conceptual framework for analysing advertising images from a semiotic perspective, posing fundamental questions such as: What constitutes the rhetoric of an image, and can a photograph be regarded as a type of language with its own codes and rules governing the arrangement of its elements? From his study of food product advertisements, Barthes proposed that the meaning of an image comprises three types of messages that work together in the construction of meaning.

The first type is the **linguistic message**, which consists of the text or verbal explanations appearing in an image. This type of message functions as an **"anchor"**, directing the viewer's interpretation of the image and constraining its multiple potential meanings within the intended communicative framework (Barthes, 1977). Language thus serves as a tool for guiding perception and preventing the meaning of the image from drifting in unintended directions.

The second type is the **non-coded message**, or **denotation**, which presents the image at a literal level—that is, what is visibly present in the photograph, such as colours, objects, and shapes, without additional interpretation. Although photographs may appear "non-coded" and merely record reality, Barthes (1977) emphasizes that images inherently contain codes that are subtly embedded within them.

The third and most significant type is the **coded message**, or **connotation**, which relates to the cultural, symbolic, and ideological meanings embedded in an image. In the case of the food advertisements analysed by Barthes, the arrangement of products to appear freshly purchased from the market, along with the use of the colours of the

Italian flag (red, white, and green), conveys notions of freshness, meticulousness, and Italian identity appreciated by the French audience (Barthes, 1977). These symbolic representations are largely accepted by viewers without question. Similarly, in photographs of politicians facing a particular direction, the composition suggests vision, while an image of a desk with a family portrait conveys responsibility and warmth.

Barthes (1977) emphasizes that the arrangement and composition of elements within an image differ from the linear ordering of words in language, yet they possess their own rhetoric. Connoted meanings in images are constructed through compositional arrangements that relate to cultural and social contexts, allowing viewers who share the same cultural background to decode these meanings without necessarily being consciously aware of them.

The Third Meaning

Beyond the levels of meaning, Barthes (1977) also proposed the concept of the "obtuse meaning" (or third meaning) through his study of film stills from Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*. He distinguished three levels of meaning that operate simultaneously and overlap within the image.

The First Level: informational Meaning; It represents the basic, readily identifiable meaning, such as scenes, characters, costumes, locations, and events depicted in the image, which constitute information that can be perceived similarly by all viewers (Barthes, 1977).

The Second Level: Symbolic Meaning; This level represents the meaning intentionally conveyed by the creator, connecting with cultural, historical, and ideological symbols. Examples include a clenched first gesture symbolizing power, a hairstyle indicating a particular era, or

a child's hat representing innocence amidst sorrow. Barthes (1977) emphasizes that a sign always carries multiple meanings and can be interpreted in various ways depending on the context.

The Third Level: Obtuse Meaning; This level represents the meaning that exceeds the creator's intended message; it cannot be fully articulated verbally and is generated by the viewer. Such meaning arises from subtle details in the image, such as facial expressions, glances, gestures, or elements that may appear to have no direct narrative significance but evoke overflowing emotions and experiential responses (Barthes, 1977). This level of meaning is not fixed; it shifts according to the viewer's individual experiences, context, and the time at which the image is encountered.

Stills and Cinema: A Space for Meaning

Barthes (1977) clearly distinguishes between still images and film, viewing film as "horizontal", moving continuously through time, focusing on narrative and the creation of meaning aligned with the director's intent. In contrast, still images are "vertical", frozen in time, providing viewers with the opportunity to examine details carefully and thoroughly. A still image is not merely a captured moment of a situation but a tool with the potential to generate multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used (Barthes, 1977).

When a still is extracted from a film, it becomes a new "text" that can be read and interpreted independently of the original narrative. Still images therefore allow the "third meaning" to emerge more clearly, as viewers are not propelled forward by the flow of the story but can pause and engage with ambiguous, subtle, and exceeding meanings beyond the intended content.

Images as Language: Reading and Writing

A central tenet of Barthes's theory (1977) is the conceptualization of images as a form of language that can be "read" like a text. Images do not possess inherent meaning; rather, meaning is constructed through the interplay of signs, cultural context, and the viewer. The arrangement of elements within an image functions similarly to rhetoric in language, with rules and patterns that generate meaning.

However, Barthes (1977) does not view semiotic theory as a mechanism that nullifies or erases meaning; rather, it serves as a tool for understanding the processes of meaning-making and communication in images. Revealing the three levels of meaning—denotation, connotation, and the third or obtuse meaning—illuminates the power of images to communicate what is explicit, what is hidden, and what exceeds the creator's control.

Understanding images through Barthes's framework thus provides a foundational approach to the study of media, art, and visual culture in the contemporary world, particularly in contexts where photographs and moving images play a crucial role in shaping meaning, identity, and social ideology.

Reading Culture through Photographs: Behind the Lens and Hidden Meanings

Photographs are not merely records of reality; they reflect the worldview, ideology, and power structures embedded behind the frame. Reading culture through photographs therefore requires semiotic analysis, an understanding of the social context, and an awareness of the power dynamics inherent in the production of images.

Photographs as a System of Signs and Rhetoric

Roland Barthes, a French scholar and pioneer in the study of cultural semiotics, demonstrated that seemingly mundane cultural objects, such as advertising and fashion photographs, conceal complex meanings. Barthes developed concepts regarding the functioning of signs and rhetoric, which operate to naturalize and legitimize products, thereby facilitating consumer acceptance (Chaiya, K., 2022) The study of "mountain buffaloes" in the Karen community of Ban Wung Kasang, Kamphaeng Phet Province, applied Barthes's frameworks of the "third meaning" and the "rhetoric of the image", combined with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. The research revealed that buffalo herding is not merely an economic activity but carries complex symbolic meanings, reflecting cultural dimensions and the relationships among people, buffaloes, and nature ((Nikornkul, P., et al., 2024; Tasawang, W., & Raksa, T., 2017) Photographs also reflect societal issues in Thailand by offering critical and satirical perspectives on social structures and realities that are often overlooked by members of society.

Photographs and Political Power

Cameras have never been neutral tools; they have been used to serve the political agendas of Western powers, particularly France and England. Photographs taken by European travellers became part of exploratory processes that enabled France and England to understand the people, environments, histories, and cultures of the countries they sought to dominate (Saranpuet, S. 2020) A study of Salvatore Besso's travel books demonstrates the mediating role of photography in cultural encounters, emphasizing the interaction between images and text. This interaction reflects the dynamics between Western cultures as content creators

and Siamese culture as the constructed content. (Silapavithayadilok, P., 2024)

Photographs, Identity Formation, and Resource Management

Photographs serve as a tool for constructing and affirming community identity. The Karen-Po community in Nong Lak, Lamphun Province, utilizes self-representation through imagery to assert power in negotiating resource management rights. Debates over local perspectives contribute to the portrayal of the village as forest guardians or as a "developed Karen community." This imagery carries symbolic power that the community employs to reshape social movements and influence policy decisions. (Sangkachart, H., 2019)

Photographs in Data Collection and Interpretation

A study conducted in Chainat Province found that historical, social, and cultural photographs often suffer from unclear objectives and a lack of proper preservation and management. Appropriate documentation should follow an explanatory format and address four key goals: ensuring that photographs are adequate in quantity, of high quality, systematically archived and utilized, and properly managed. (Ngcenchang, J., Phaengsoi, K., & Thidpad, P., 2019) Anthropological photographs result from the photographer's presence in the field and close engagement with people's lives. Each photograph conveys the cumulative experiences, camera perspectives, techniques, narrative strategies, and material conditions encountered in the field, inviting reflection, prompting critical questions, and shaping the understanding of social and cultural life amid ongoing change. (Vejvarabhorn, W., 2023)

Limitations and Challenges

Reading culture through photographs involves several limitations that must be acknowledged: (1) photographs

represent a selective framing of reality, shaped by the photographer's lens and perspective, and (2) image analysts are influenced by their own backgrounds and biases. As Charles F. Keyes has demonstrated, field experiences significantly affect the interpretation of photographs. (Panyagaw, W., 2022) 3) The power to produce and disseminate images is often concentrated in the hands of a limited group of people. (4) The meaning of photographs shifts according to context and over time. (5) Reliance on technology may overlook subtle meanings that require contextual understanding.

Conclusion

Photographs serve as a site of contestation and negotiation over cultural meaning. Reading culture through photographs requires a multidimensional understanding, ranging from semiotic and rhetorical analysis to an awareness of political power, the role of images in identity formation, and the complexities inherent in interpretation. In a world saturated with images, the ability to critically read and interpret photographs is an essential skill. Interpreting culture through photographs is not about uncovering a final, fixed meaning; rather, it is a process of revealing multiple, sometimes conflicting layers of meaning, enabling a deeper understanding of the complexities of social and cultural life.

General Overview of the Karen Village, Ban Dong, Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province

Ban Dong is a long-established Karen village with a history spanning over 100 years, located in Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province. Originally, the Karen community lived farther away near the Hu Chang area, but due to their preference for solitude and avoidance of external interactions, they gradually migrated to the current location. The village is situated approximately 5–7 kilometres from

neighbouring communities such as Ban Thonglang (a Lao village) and Ban Nam Phu (another Karen village).

The number of households has grown from fewer than ten in the past to approximately 25 at present, owing to migration from Ban Nam Phu and the division of families among younger generations. The village also has two communal halls for religious ceremonies, but no resident monks.

The topography of the village is gently to moderately sloped, ranging from 0 to 20 degrees, making it suitable for farming and rice cultivation. Natural resources are abundant, as the village lies near the Khao Yai Mountains, with fertile and moist soil. Multiple streams provide water rich in fish and natural vegetation, such as edible ferns, which are available year-round. During the dry season, water levels decrease significantly, while in the rainy season, streams swell, sometimes forming temporary waterfalls.

Access to the village is convenient. Travel from Bangkok to Ban Dong can be completed in one day via buses, local minivans, or walking short distances in certain sections.

Traditional houses were small, elevated structures primarily made of bamboo, with thatched roofs, bamboo floors, bamboo walls, and bamboo staircases. Over the past 4–5 years, housing has significantly improved, using larger trees and wooden planks, metal roofing, wider living spaces, and separate kitchens and granaries in some households. Fully developed houses resemble typical Thai houses, featuring operable doors and windows, ceilings for temperature control, and fences for livestock protection.

In the last few years, the village has undergone clear development in housing construction, transportation, and quality of life. Construction has shifted from communal labor to hiring skilled workers and purchasing materials.

Residents of Ban Dong have experienced substantial socio-economic progress while maintaining traditional lifestyles and close ties to the natural environment. In conclusion, Ban Dong is a historic Karen village that demonstrates ongoing development while successfully preserving its cultural heritage and harmonious relationship with nature.

Resource Management and Livelihoods of the Ban Dong Karen Community, Khok Khwai Subdistrict, Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province

The Ban Dong community, located in Khok Khwai Subdistrict, Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province, exemplifies a rural society that integrates traditional livelihoods with adaptations to the market economy. Most of the land within the community is registered under the Agricultural Land Reform (Sor Por Kor) and Nor Sor 3 titles, while some land documentation remains in process. Outside the village, approximately 20 rai of historic land have been occupied by Karen families since the past. Forest resource management is well-defined. Forest areas are divided into reserved forests and community forests, which are carefully overseen by local residents. The use of timber for construction requires permission from the village head and the local committee. Nevertheless, the community faces challenges in enforcing regulations on outsiders, which has led to a gradual reduction of resources. Despite this, residents continue to uphold beliefs in forest spirits, such as the Shrine of Mother Hin Thern Yai and the Mother Takien, while also engaging in annual reforestation efforts.

Forest resources are utilized not only for construction and food but also for handicrafts such as basket weaving. The community once considered developing tourism, including creating the Seven-Tiered Royal Waterfall and promoting the largest tamarind tree in Thailand, but these

initiatives were restricted by protected forest regulations. Consequently, the community focused on developing a manageable water supply system and other infrastructure. The main water sources originate from the forested hills, providing an abundant supply including small fish for protein. Mountain spring water systems and groundwater pumps have been established for several decades, supported by government projects such as the construction of royal merit weirs. Regular forest patrolling is conducted in collaboration with various government agencies to prevent encroachment and maintain the sustainability of forest resources. The community's economy is primarily based on agriculture. Key commercial crops include sugarcane, cassava, pineapple, corn, and rubber, with crop selection largely determined by market prices. Rice is cultivated mainly for household consumption. Reliance on rainwater remains significant, and middlemen purchase agricultural products for distribution outside the community. (Nikornkul, P., 2017)

In conclusion, Ban Dong is a community that balances traditional lifestyles with adaptation to the market economy. Residents actively participate in sustainable resource management through both internal cooperation and external support, while still facing challenges related to legal restrictions on protected forests, external encroachment, and the vulnerability of an agriculture-dependent economy.

Analysis and discussion

Ethnographic photographs are not merely records of everyday life but serve as sites for meaning-making, power negotiation, and the expression of complex identities. This study analyses 11 photographs of the Ban Dong Karen community, Kork Khwai Subdistrict, Ban Rai District, Uthai Thani Province, taken between 1975 and 2017, using Roland Barthes's framework of visual semiotics. In particular, it

employs his concept of the three levels of meaning—denotation, connotation, and obtuse meaning—to decode manifest meanings, latent meanings, and overflowing meanings that allow diverse interpretations by viewers. This analysis aims to reveal how these images reflect power relations (colonial gaze), identity affirmation (performativity), attachment to the land, and the negotiation of residential space within the Karen community.

Image 1: An aerial photograph depicting a group of people seated in a circle on rocks. The composition clearly conveys a "ritual" or "community gathering," representing an evident semiotic meaning (studium). However, the details of gestures, lighting, and shadows generate an obtuse meaning, allowing for multiple interpretations.



Figure 1: A group of people sitting in a circle on rocks (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 2: A group of people sitting together by the riverside. The spatial relationship between humans and nature reflects their way of life and connection with the environment. Subtle details convey a punctum, adding layers of latent meaning.



Figure 2: A group of people sitting together by the riverside (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 3: A person inside a house, evoking a private atmosphere. The photograph conveys intimacy and aspects of everyday life that are not explicitly "inscribed" for ethnographic photography, raising questions about gaze and the power dynamics inherent in photographing.



Figure 3: A person inside a house (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 4: A group of people resting in an open area. The composition depicts "leisure" or "free time," which is

often overlooked in ethnographic photography but carries significant cultural meaning.



Figure 4: A group of people resting in an open area (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 5: A faded-colour photograph depicting activities in an outdoor setting. The degraded quality (faded colours) acts as a signifier of time and memory, linking to Barthes's concept of "that-has-been."



Figure 5: A faded-colour photograph depicting activities in an outdoor setting (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 6: A formal group portrait illustrating the conventions of classic ethnographic photography, where individuals are "arranged" according to the colonial gaze. However, subtle details in clothing and posture convey resistance or agency.



Figure 6: A formal group portrait (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 7: A photograph of a stream, a landscape without people, serving as the context of life. The emptiness conveys an obtuse meaning, stimulating the viewer's imagination.



Figure 7: A landscape (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 8: A riverside activity depicting the performance of culture and the community's relationship with nature. The movement in gestures and energy generates an obtuse meaning.



Figure 8: A riverside activity (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 9: An individual in a distinctive pose, a solo portrait differing from group images, highlighting individuality within the view of the ethnic group. The photograph contains a punctum that may affect viewers in varied ways.



Figure 9: An individual in a distinctive pose (Photo by Usanee Phrommas, 1976)

Image 10: The village/community hall and community forest area illustrate the performativity of community participation, reflecting grassroots democracy through the equitable spatial arrangement. Obtuse meaning arises from attentive gestures and natural lighting that convey an atmosphere of hope and seriousness. The community forest signpost signifies the performativity of community identity and recognition of existence, acting as a symbol of state acknowledgment. Obtuse meaning is further conveyed through smiles and postures expressing pride, achievement, and the security of the Karen community.



Figure 10: The village/community hall (Photo by Parinya Nikornkul, 2017)

Image 11: A man stands gazing over farmland and forest areas, with a barbed-wire fence marking territorial boundaries. The image illustrates the performativity of human-land relationships, reflecting livelihoods and land stewardship. Obtuse meaning emerges from his stance, conveying attachment, ownership, and the uncertainty of the future on the land he inhabits. The image also demonstrates the performativity of state power and boundary-making; the barbed-wire fence symbolizes the division between “buffer zones” and cultivated areas. Obtuse meaning is further conveyed through the emptiness of the path and the density of the forest, highlighting tension, constraints, and the negotiation of living space for the Karen community.



Figure 11: A man stands gazing over farmland and forest areas (Photo by Parinya Nikornkul, 2017)

Conclusion

The study of ethnographic photographs of the Karen community and external photographers spanning more than 40 years (1975–2017), examined through Roland Barthes' theory of photographic semiotics, reveals the complex and multilayered meanings embedded in these images, extending far beyond mere documentation of everyday life. The analysis considers denotation (the literal meaning), connotation (the symbolic and culturally informed meanings), and obtuse meaning (the excess or enigmatic meaning that allows for diverse interpretations by viewers). The findings demonstrate that these photographs not only capture daily activities and communal life but also reflect power relations between photographers and the community, the construction of identity and performance, and the community's connection to land and natural resources. Moreover, the study highlights the role of photographs in negotiating cultural meanings and complex interpretations, which may reveal social change, cultural diversity, and

dynamic livelihoods. Thus, interpreting these images is not about discovering a singular definitive meaning; rather, it is an academic process that deepens our understanding of social structures, cultural practices, and power dynamics through visual culture.

Three Levels of Meaning in Photographs

1. Denotation (Literal Meaning): These images present fundamental elements that are immediately recognizable, such as groups of people sitting in a circle, riverside activities, forest landscapes, community forest signs, and barbed wire fences. These components provide baseline information that can be perceived similarly by all viewers.

2. Connotation (Studium / Cultural or Symbolic Meaning): The photographs communicate culturally and symbolically intended meanings. For instance, the circular seating arrangement signifies rituals or communal gatherings; riverside activities reflect relationships with nature; formal group portraits represent conventions of classical ethnographic photography; community forest signs symbolize state recognition; and barbed wire fences denote state authority and territorial boundaries.

3. Obtuse Meaning / Punctum: The obtuse meaning in photographs represents the most subtle and personal layer of interpretation. It arises from small, often overlooked details in the image that affect each viewer differently, producing emotions, sensations, and multiple possible readings rather than a single definitive meaning. For example, the interplay of light and shadow in ritual or communal gathering images evokes an atmosphere of seriousness and hope. Faded colors in older photographs serve as a signifier of time and memory, resonating with Barthes' concept of "that-has-been." The gestures and expressions of individuals in solo portraits highlight

individuality amid the perception of the community as an ethnic group. Empty landscapes stimulate imagination and contextual reflection, while the stance of a man gazing over fields and forests conveys attachment, a sense of ownership, and uncertainty about the future, simultaneously reflecting the power structures and constraints the community negotiates to maintain their living space. These images allow each viewer to generate personal interpretations from subtle elements not intentionally emphasized, deepening the understanding of the Karen community's life in rich and complex ways.

Power, Negotiation, and Identity

Ethnographic photography cannot be separated from power relations. The analysis reveals several key aspects:

1. Colonial Gaze and Arrangement – Formal group portraits illustrate the conventions in which individuals are "arranged" according to the colonial gaze. At the same time, however, details such as clothing, gestures, and postures generate subtle forms of resistance or agency, indicating that the community is not merely an object of observation but actively negotiates and asserts its identity.

2. Performativity of Identity – The photograph of the community forest sign, along with the smiles and gestures of community members, demonstrates the performativity of identity, pride, and achievement in asserting their existence. This is not merely a record; it is an active expression by the community asserting and performing their own identity.

3. Tensions between the Community and the State – The photograph of the barbed wire fence delineating territorial boundaries, together with the stance of a man observing the land, reflects the tension between the "buffer zone" and the "productive area." The emptiness of the path and the density of the forest signify the constraints and

negotiations over residential and land-use rights of the Karen community.

4. Still Images as Spaces for Reflection – According to Barthes, still images differ from films in that they are static, allowing viewers the time to examine details carefully and at their own pace. These ethnographic photographs of the Karen community become "texts" that can be read and interpreted in multiple ways. They include everyday life images that convey intimacy (e.g., portraits), raising questions about gaze and photographic power; images of "leisure moments" that are often overlooked in ethnographic photography but carry significant cultural meaning; and images of the community pavilion, which demonstrate the performativity of communal participation and grassroots democracy.

5. Images as a Readable Language – This analysis affirms Barthes' concept that images function as a language that can be "read" like a text. Ethnographic photographs of the Karen community do not possess inherent meaning; rather, meaning is constructed through the interplay of signs, cultural context, and the viewer. The arrangement of elements, light and shadow, colour, and composition all act as rhetorical devices that generate meaning. Importantly, these images do not convey only the photographer's intended message but also carry obtuse meanings created by the viewers themselves. Such meanings are fluid, changing according to individual experiences, contexts, and the temporal moment in which each viewer engages with the image.

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In conclusion, the ethnographic photographs of the Karen community reveal the complex layers of meaning embedded in visual representations. They reflect power dynamics, identity performance, and the negotiation between community and external forces, while simultaneously allowing space for personal interpretation. By reading these images critically, we gain deeper insight into the cultural, social, and historical dimensions of the community, highlighting photography not just as documentation but as an active site of meaning-making and cultural reflection.

Recommendations

1. Policy Recommendations

1.1 Recognition of Rights and Management of Ethnographic Community Image Heritage. The state should review forest and land management policies to align with the rights and livelihoods of the Karen community, particularly by recognizing community forest systems and ensuring fair participation in resource management. Simultaneously, a national ethnographic image archive should be established, managed with active community involvement, setting clear guidelines for preservation, access, and use of images while respecting copyright and the dignity of the community. Additionally, funding should be

provided to support communities in digitizing and systematically maintaining their cultural heritage.

1.2 Policy Recommendations: Support for Community Media and Education for Cultural Diversity. Allocate funding and resources to support community-based media projects that enable the Karen community and other ethnic groups to produce visual media and tell their own stories. Provide training in photography and media production skills for community members. Integrate content on critical visual literacy, understanding cultural diversity, and awareness of the power of gaze into educational curricula at all levels, using ethnographic photographs as case studies. Establish research ethics guidelines that emphasize community participation and ensure benefits are returned to the community.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Future research should adopt a participatory visual methodology, positioning the Karen community as co-creators of knowledge. This can be implemented through Participatory Visual Research, where community members actively analyse and interpret the 11 photographs themselves. Methods such as Photovoice or Photo Elicitation Interviews can be employed, using the images as discussion prompts with community members of different generations—elders, middle-aged adults, and youth. This approach allows researchers to compare interpretations made by external researchers with those of the community, exploring how each age group perceives and ascribes meaning to the photographs. Additionally, such participatory research can support the community in creating their own photographic archives and storytelling practices, empowering them to document and convey their cultural identity from their own perspectives.

2.2 Comparative Study Across Ethnic Groups and Time Periods: Future research could conduct a comparative analysis of ethnographic photographs of the Karen community alongside other ethnic groups (e.g., Hmong, Lahu, Akha) to examine patterns of representation, colonial gaze, and power negotiation, identifying both similarities and differences across communities. Additionally, the study could analyse changes in photographic representation over time by categorizing images into decades (1975–1985, 1986–1995, 1996–2005, 2006–2017). This temporal segmentation would allow researchers to explore how visual portrayals relate to historical context, state policies, and social movements in each period, providing insight into the dynamic interactions between photography, culture, and socio-political forces.

2.3 Study of Photographers and Image Production Contexts: Future research could investigate the photographers behind each image—whether anthropologists, researchers, state officials, or community members themselves—to understand their positionality, power, and intentions that shape the production of meaning. The study should analyse differences between images taken by outsiders versus those captured by community members (if available). Furthermore, integrating Barthes' semiotic theory with other theoretical frameworks, such as postcolonial theory, visual anthropology, and critical discourse analysis, would provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the multiple layers of meaning embedded in ethnographic photographs.

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A Community Economy Model for Sustainable Community Development: A Case Study of Ban Thung Kluai, Phayao Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This academic article presents an analysis of a community economy model that can lead to sustainable community development. The study is based on a review of relevant literature and research, using the case study of Ban Thung Kluai community in Phayao Province as an illustrative example. The concept of community economy is presented as an alternative approach to grassroots economic development that emphasizes self-reliance, sustainable use of local resources, and strengthening communities from within. This approach aligns with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Based on a comprehensive literature review and conceptual analysis, the author proposes that an effective community economy model should consist of four interconnected core components: (1) Sustainable Resource Management, which emphasizes the conscious use of local resources and maintaining ecological balance; (2) Community Enterprise Development, which promotes collective organization and efficient, transparent management; (3) Knowledge Transfer and Human Capital

Development, which focuses on preserving wisdom and developing the capacity of community members; and (4) Collaborative Networking, which connects communities with various sectors for mutual development.

This article demonstrates that community economy is not merely an alternative economic system, but rather a holistic development process that integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The success of community economy depends on strong social capital within the community, support from various sectors, and the ability to adapt to changing contexts. The proposed conceptual framework can be applied to other communities, with appropriate adaptation to local contexts of each area.

Keywords: Community Economy, Sustainable Development, Local Wisdom, Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, Community Enterprise

Introduction

Sustainable community development has become a widely discussed topic in academic and international development circles, particularly in the context of developing countries that still rely on grassroots economies. Over the past decades, traditional development approaches that prioritized economic growth as the primary goal have been seriously questioned due to their negative impacts on the environment, society, and culture (Schumacher, 1973; Sen, 1999). The concept of "community economy" has thus been proposed as an alternative that emphasizes development from within, utilization of local resources, and strengthening of communities (Phiboon Wattanasiritham, 2007; Sanan Kunsuan, 2008). Furthermore, the community economy concept is consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals

1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) (United Nations, 2015).

In the Thai context, the concept of community economy is closely linked to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy bestowed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great as a development guideline. This philosophy emphasizes moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, which aligns with the principles of community economy that stress sustainability and self-reliance (National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018; Piboolsravut, 2004; Mongsawad, 2010). The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy provides a balanced approach to development that integrates economic growth, social well-being, and environmental conservation.

Ban Thung Kluai community in Phayao Province is referenced in literature and community development documents as an interesting example of community economy development based on local wisdom, particularly in traditional textile weaving (Department of Community Development, 2023; Supaporn Praditsuwanna, 2019). This community demonstrates the feasibility of integrating traditional wisdom with modern knowledge, community organization, and networking with various sectors, which are essential components of sustainable community economy. The community has been recognized for its success in preserving traditional weaving techniques while adapting to contemporary market demands and building cooperative relationships with government agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector.

This academic article aims to analyze and propose a conceptual framework for a "Community Economy Model" that can lead to sustainable community development. The analysis is based on a review of relevant literature and

conceptual analysis, using the case study of Ban Thung Kluai community as an illustrative example. The author hopes that the proposed conceptual framework will be useful for academics, community development practitioners, and policymakers in designing and implementing sustainable community development, both in Thailand and in neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, particularly the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which shares similar social and cultural contexts.

Concepts and Theoretical Framework

1. The Concept of Community Economy

Community economy is a concept developed from critiques of the capitalist free-market economic system that emphasizes competition, profit maximization, and economic growth as primary goals, which often result in negative impacts on local communities, the environment, and social inequality (Schumacher, 1973; Polanyi, 1944). The community economy concept thus proposes an alternative that focuses on community-centered economic development, aiming for stability and sustainability rather than rapid growth.

According to Thai scholars Sanan Kunsuan (2008) and Anan Ganjanapan (2006), community economy refers to an economic system based on local resources, collective effort of community members, and self-reliance, emphasizing collective benefits and fairness over individual interests. The essential components of community economy include: (1) efficient and sustainable use of local resources; (2) forming groups and building networks for cooperation; (3) creating added value from local products and services; (4) fair distribution of income and benefits; and (5) establishing mechanisms for continuous learning and development. This concept believes that economic security

begins at the household and community levels, which differs from the capitalist economic system that emphasizes competition and maximum profit (Anan Ganjanapan, 2006).

At the international level, similar concepts appear in the forms of Community-Based Economy, Solidarity Economy, and Social Economy, which emphasize fair production and consumption, collective resource management, and community strengthening (Laville, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2006). These concepts share the common goal of challenging the competitive capitalist economic system and proposing alternatives that emphasize cooperation and fairness.

2. Sustainable Community Development

The concept of sustainable development was significantly defined in the "Our Common Future" report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This concept emphasizes balance among economic development, social development, and environmental conservation.

When applied to community contexts, sustainable community development refers to a development process that integrates three dimensions: Economic Sustainability, which emphasizes continuous income generation and economic security; Social Sustainability, which emphasizes fairness, participation, and quality of life; and Environmental Sustainability, which emphasizes conscious resource use and maintaining ecological balance (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 1998).

The United Nations has established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with goals directly related to community economic development including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 8 (Decent Work and

Economic Growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (United Nations, 2015). These goals reflect the importance of grassroots community development in achieving global development objectives. Community development must therefore consider the balance among economic growth, social justice, and environmental conservation.

3. Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Community Economy

The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a development approach bestowed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great, emphasizing balance and sufficiency. This philosophy consists of three core principles: Moderation, Reasonableness, and Self-immunity, with Knowledge and Morality as foundations (National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018). Several scholars have analyzed and proposed that the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy strongly aligns with the community economy concept (Phiboon Wattanasiritham, 2007; Piboolsravut, 2004; Mongsawad, 2010). Both concepts emphasize balance, sustainability, and self-reliance, rather than focusing on profit maximization or rapid economic growth. Moderation in the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy corresponds to appropriate resource use in community economy; reasonableness corresponds to decision-making based on knowledge and information; and immunity corresponds to building strength and diversity in occupations. When the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is applied to community economy development, it helps communities manage resources moderately and appropriately, reduce dependence on external factors, build internal strength, and promote local cooperation networks (Phiboon Wattanasiritham, 2007; Mongsawad, 2010).

4. Local Wisdom, Social Capital, and Sustainability

Local wisdom or indigenous knowledge is knowledge accumulated and transmitted through generations in communities, reflecting understanding of local environments, natural resources, and appropriate ways of living. It is cultural capital accumulated over long periods, reflecting a balanced way of life between humans and nature (Department of Cultural Promotion, 2020). Several scholars propose that local wisdom plays a crucial role in sustainable development, as it is knowledge that has been tested and refined over long periods, is appropriate to local contexts, and tends to maintain balance between humans and nature (Warren et al., 1995; Berkes, 2012). Beyond local wisdom, the concept of "Social Capital" is also an essential component of sustainable community economy. According to Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988), social capital refers to networks of relationships, trust, and norms that enable people in communities to cooperate effectively. Strong social capital helps reduce transaction costs, increases efficiency in collaborative work, and creates resilience in crisis management, which are critical factors for community economy success.

Case Study: Ban Thung Kluai, Phayao Province

Ban Thung Kluai village in Ban Tom Sub-district, Mueang Phayao District, Phayao Province, is referenced in various documents and research as an interesting example of community economy development based on local wisdom, particularly traditional textile weaving (Department of Community Development, 2023; Supaporn Praditsuwanna, 2019; Chanthana Boonchou et al., 2020). In this section, the author presents information from relevant documents and

literature to analyze key characteristics of Ban Thung Kluai's community economy development.

1. Community Context and Distinctive Features

According to documentation from the Department of Community Development (2023), Ban Thung Kluai is a community with a long history of traditional textile weaving, with villagers inheriting textile weaving wisdom for many generations. The community's textiles are distinguished by the use of natural raw materials, particularly locally grown cotton and natural dyes from local plants and herbs such as indigo, turmeric, and various tree barks. The entire production process is done by hand, from spinning yarn to weaving on traditional looms.

The distinctive features of Ban Thung Kluai community mentioned in literature include successful collective organization and participatory management. Supaporn Praditsuwanna (2019) states that the Ban Thung Kluai weaving group has clear administrative structure, transparent accounting systems, and revolving funds to support members. Furthermore, the group has established cooperation with various organizations including government agencies, educational institutions, and private sector, which has enabled product development and market expansion.

2. Community Enterprise Development

According to the Department of Community Development report (2023), the Ban Thung Kluai weaving group has been promoted to register as a community enterprise under the Community Enterprise Promotion Act B.E. 2548 (2005), which has given the group legal status and easier access to funding sources and government support. The group's management emphasizes good governance principles, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities,

regular member meetings, and systematic financial record-keeping.

Chanthana Boonchou et al. (2020) found that the success of the Ban Thung Kluai weaving group stems from having revolving funds and an internal credit system that enables members to access capital for purchasing raw materials and developing products without relying on informal lending sources with high interest rates. Additionally, the group has a fair pricing system that considers production costs, labor, and market prices, which helps members earn appropriate and stable income.

3. Resource and Environmental Management

Regarding resource and environmental management, documentation from the Department of Cultural Promotion (2020) indicates that Ban Thung Kluai community has environmentally friendly approaches to resource use, emphasizing the use of local natural raw materials, rotating cotton cultivation without chemical use, and using plant and herb-based dyes that do not cause pollution. This approach not only helps conserve the environment but also serves as an important selling point for products that appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.

4. Knowledge Transfer and Network Building

Knowledge succession is a significant challenge for traditional handicraft communities. As Supaporn Praditsuwanna (2019) mentions, the Ban Thung Kluai weaving group has attempted to address this issue by organizing weaving training for youth and interested individuals, collaborating with local schools, and establishing a traditional textile learning center that serves as both a learning resource and cultural tourism destination.

Regarding networking, the group has established cooperation with multiple sectors, including receiving academic support from Phayao University in product development and marketing, collaboration with the Department of Community Development in promotion and capacity building, and cooperation with the private sector in marketing and product distribution (Department of Community Development, 2023).



Figure 1: Map of the Community-Based Tourism Route in Ban Thung Kluai, Phayao Province, Thailand
(Source: Adapted from local tourism and community enterprise data, Ban Thung Kluai, Phayao Province.)

A Community Economy Model for Sustainable Community Development

Based on literature review and analysis of the Ban Thung Kluai case study, the author proposes a "Community Economy Model for Sustainable Community Development" consisting of four core components that are interconnected

and mutually reinforcing. This model reflects the complexity and holistic nature of community economy, which is not merely an economic system but a holistic development process integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

1. Sustainable Resource Management

The first component emphasizes efficient and sustainable use of local resources, considering the balance between utilization and conservation. This concept aligns with Ostrom's (1990) Common Pool Resources Management principles, which propose that communities can effectively manage resources collectively if they have clear rules, member participation, and appropriate monitoring mechanisms. In the context of community economy, sustainable resource management encompasses multiple dimensions including: (1) conscious use of natural resources, such as rotating crop cultivation, using natural dyes instead of chemical dyes, and efficient water management; (2) preserving biodiversity, such as growing multiple crop varieties instead of monoculture; and (3) reducing environmental impact, such as reducing fossil fuel energy use and appropriate waste management. The Ban Thung Kluai case demonstrates the implementation of these principles, with the community using local natural raw materials, rotating cotton cultivation, and using plant-based dyes that do not cause pollution (Department of Cultural Promotion, 2020).

2. Community Enterprise Development

The second component emphasizes creating and developing community economic organizations with good, transparent, and fair management. Community enterprises are crucial mechanisms for mobilizing community members' collective power to generate income and improve quality of

life together. Key principles of sustainable community enterprises as proposed by several scholars (Aphichat Sathitniramai, 2009; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006) include member participation, fair benefit distribution, management transparency, and creating added value from local resources. In practice, community enterprise development must consider several issues including: (1) appropriate administrative structure with clearly defined roles; (2) transparent financial and accounting systems; (3) democratic decision-making mechanisms; (4) fair benefit-sharing systems; and (5) mechanisms for creating revolving funds and accessing capital sources. The Ban Thung Kluai weaving group demonstrates the importance of revolving funds and internal credit systems that enable members to access capital without relying on informal lending sources with high costs (Chanthana Boonchou et al., 2020).

3. Knowledge Transfer and Human Capital Development

The third component emphasizes the importance of learning, knowledge transfer, and developing community members' capacity, which are essential foundations for long-term sustainability. The Human Capital concept by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964) proposes that investment in education and training is the most important factor for economic development. In the community economy context, human capital development not only refers to formal school education but also includes learning local wisdom, production skills, and management capabilities. A major challenge in transferring local wisdom in the modern era is attracting young people's interest, as much wisdom requires time and patience to learn and may not provide high short-term returns compared to other occupations (Warren et al., 1995). Therefore, creating interesting learning mechanisms,

integrating traditional knowledge with modern technology, and providing appropriate financial incentives are crucial. The Ban Thung Kluai case of organizing weaving training, collaborating with schools, and establishing learning centers exemplifies efforts to address this issue (Supaporn Praditsuwanna, 2019).

4. Collaborative Networking

The final component emphasizes the importance of building relationships and cooperation with various sectors both inside and outside the community. Network and Social Capital concepts by Granovetter (1985) and Putnam (2000) demonstrate that economic success does not depend solely on economic factors but also on social relationships and collaborative networks. Strong networks enable communities to access broader resources, knowledge, technology, and markets. The author proposes that collaborative networks in the community economy context should comprise multiple levels and sectors including: (1) intra-community networks, such as relationships among group members; (2) inter-community networks, such as networks of community product groups; (3) networks with government agencies; (4) networks with educational institutions; and (5) networks with the private sector. The Ban Thung Kluai case demonstrates the importance of diverse collaborative networks (Department of Community Development, 2023).

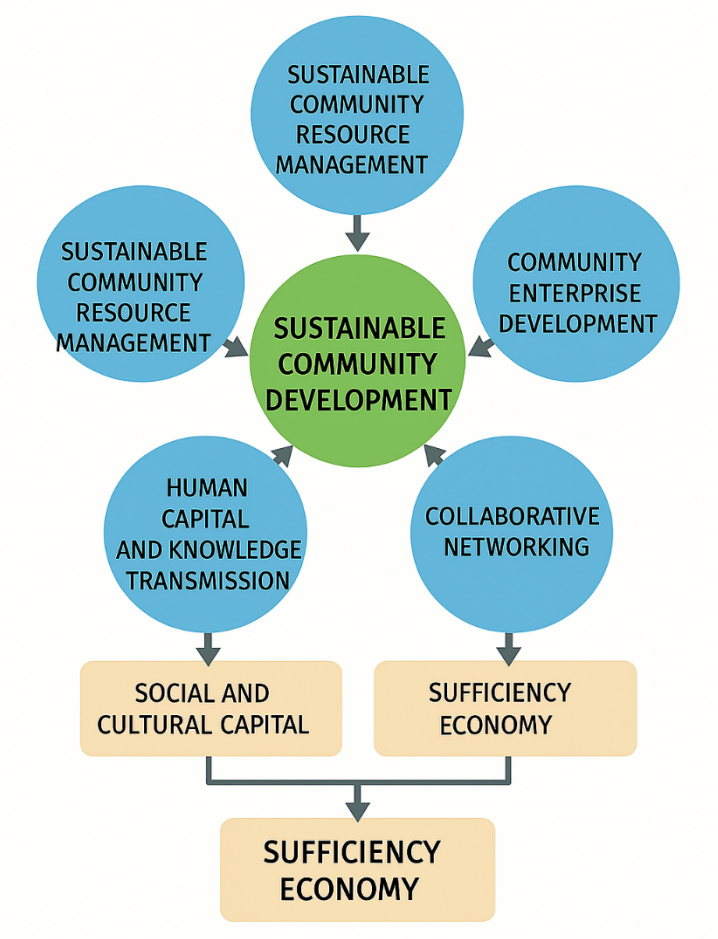


Figure 2 : A Community Economy Model for Sustainable Community Development
: A Case Study of Ban Thung Kluai, Phayao Province, Thailand

Analysis and Discussion

1. Interconnections Among Components

From the analysis, the author observes that all four components of the community economy model are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Sustainable

resource management requires strong organizations, knowledge and skills, and support from various sectors. Therefore, community economy development must take a holistic approach, developing all components simultaneously.

2. Success Factors and Challenges

From literature review, the author synthesizes success factors including: (1) strong and visionary leadership; (2) participation and commitment of members; (3) strong social capital; (4) support from various sectors; and (5) ability to adapt and learn continuously. Challenges include: (1) labor shortages, especially young people; (2) competition from industrial products; (3) limitations in accessing markets; (4) lack of working capital; and (5) environmental changes.

3. Lessons and Recommendations

The author proposes several important lessons. First, community economy is not suitable for all contexts. Second, development must come from within. Third, development must balance identity preservation with adaptation. Finally, success requires cooperation from all sectors.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

From the analysis, the author has recommendations for various sectors:

1. For Government Agencies

1) Adopt the Sufficiency Economy and community economy approaches as core policy frameworks

2) Allocate budgets to support community enterprise development continuously

3) Support market creation and distribution channels for community products

4) Promote integration among agencies to avoid duplication

2. For Educational Institutions

1) Serve as academic mentors to communities continuously

2) Develop curricula related to community development

3) Support research and development addressing community needs

3. For Communities and Community Organizations

1) Strengthen social capital within communities

2) Continuously develop members' capacities

3) Create systematic mechanisms for transferring wisdom to younger generations

4) Build and expand collaborative networks

4. For International Cooperation

1) Promote knowledge exchange among communities in ASEAN

2) Develop collaborative projects for product development

3) Support comparative research on community economy



Figure 3 : The Governor of Phayao Province Visiting the Tai Lue Weaving Center at Ban Thung Kluai
(Source: Facebook page of Tai Lue Weaving Group, Ban Thung Kluai.)

Conclusion

This academic article presents a conceptual framework for a "Community Economy Model for Sustainable Community Development" consisting of four interconnected core components: sustainable resource management, community enterprise development, knowledge transfer and human capital development, and collaborative networking. This model was developed through literature review and analysis of the Ban Thung Kluai case study.

The author proposes that community economy is more than an alternative economic system; it is a holistic development process integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Successful and sustainable community economy requires strong social capital, visionary leadership, support from various sectors, and the ability to adapt to change.

The proposed framework can be applied to other communities but must be adapted to local contexts. For countries in Southeast Asia with contexts similar to Thailand, this community economy model may be an appropriate alternative for grassroots economic development. Knowledge exchange and cooperation among regional communities should be promoted. Finally, the author views sustainable community development not as a destination but as a continuous journey requiring commitment, patience, learning, and adaptation. True success is measured not solely by economic figures but by community happiness, fairness, and long-term sustainability.

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The Appeal of Arts and Culture in Luang Prabang

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Abstract

This paper explores the distinctive appeal of arts and culture in Luang Prabang, a UNESCO-listed city in northern Laos. Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1995, represents one of Southeast Asia's most significant cultural treasures. This study examines the multifaceted appeal of arts and culture in this ancient Lao city through analysis of its architectural heritage, religious traditions, traditional crafts, performing arts, and cultural preservation efforts. The city's architectural landscape presents a unique synthesis of traditional Lao temple architecture and French colonial urban planning, creating a distinctive urban fabric that defines Luang Prabang's visual appeal. The paper analyzes how Buddhist artistic traditions permeate every aspect of the city's cultural identity, from the daily alms-giving ceremony to temple murals and religious manuscripts that preserve Buddhist teachings and Lao cultural stories.

The study further examines traditional crafts including textile weaving, silversmithing, wood carving, and paper making that have been practiced for centuries, demonstrating how cultural preservation can align with contemporary economic development. Performing arts traditions encompassing classical Lao dance, traditional

music, and oral literary traditions embody the city's intangible cultural heritage. The paper discusses contemporary challenges facing cultural preservation in the 21st century, balancing conservation with development, authenticity with adaptation, and local needs with tourist expectations. The rapid growth of tourism since the 1990s has created both opportunities and threats to cultural sustainability, generating debates about appropriate development and the commodification of sacred traditions.

The findings reveal that the city's appeal lies not merely in its physical artifacts but in the living traditions that continue to shape daily life and identity in this remarkable cultural landscape. The paper further discusses the implications for community-based cultural development, creative tourism, and youth participation. Key challenges and potential success indicators are identified, offering a framework for further research in cultural tourism and heritage-based community models. The research demonstrates how Luang Prabang maintains its cultural authenticity while adapting to modern tourism pressures, and explores the interweaving of arts and culture with economic activity through craft sectors and creative ecosystems. The study concludes that cultural sustainability requires attention not only to physical conservation but also to the transmission of knowledge and skills to younger generations.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Luang Prabang, UNESCO World Heritage, traditional crafts, Buddhist arts, cultural tourism, heritage preservation, Lao culture, intangible heritage

Introduction

Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1995, is renowned for its unique blend of traditional

Lao culture and colonial influences. This small town in Laos serves as a vibrant hub of arts and culture, attracting visitors from around the globe. Luang Prabang represents one of Southeast Asia's most significant cultural treasures, nestled at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers in northern Laos. Once the royal capital of the Kingdom of Laos, this ancient city has evolved into one of Southeast Asia's most celebrated cultural destinations.

The city's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognizes its "unique and remarkably well-preserved architectural, religious and cultural heritage" that represents a fusion of traditional Lao urban architecture with structures built by European colonial authorities during the 19th and 20th centuries (UNESCO, 1995). The appeal of Luang Prabang lies not only in its stunning architecture but also in its rich cultural heritage, which is deeply intertwined with the daily lives of its residents.



The former royal capital of Laos exemplifies a distinctive convergence of material heritage, living cultural traditions, and creative economic activity. The city's appeal for arts-and-culture tourism emerges from its architectural heritage, craft traditions, ethnic minority arts, ritual life, and the interface of tradition with modern tourism. This paper examines the multifaceted dimensions of Luang Prabang's cultural appeal through analysis of its architectural and urban heritage, Buddhist artistic traditions, traditional crafts and artisan culture, performing arts and intangible heritage, and contemporary cultural preservation challenges.

Luang Prabang's history dates back to the 14th century when it became the capital of the Lane Xang Kingdom, known as the "Kingdom of a Million Elephants." This historical significance has shaped the town's cultural landscape, making it a focal point for both religious and artistic expression. Through examination of the city's unique blend of Lao and French colonial influences, Buddhist artistic traditions, and contemporary cultural practices, this study demonstrates how Luang Prabang maintains its cultural authenticity while adapting to modern tourism pressures.

Heritage Architecture and Sense of Place

Luang Prabang is inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, recognised for its outstanding example of the fusion of Lao traditional urban architecture and European colonial architecture. The architecture thus anchors a sense of place—one that is distinctive, layered, historically rooted and visually coherent. The built fabric becomes a tangible representation of local identity, continuity and transformation.Living Cultural Traditions and Ethnic Minority Arts



The city hosts the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC), dedicated to Laos's ethnic groups and craft traditions. TAEC's exhibitions and workshops demonstrate how intangible heritagerituals, dress, weaving, and community narratives—remains alive and accessible. These arts are not just decorative but embedded in cultural meaning and community identity.

Historical Context

Luang Prabang's history dates back to the 14th century when it became the capital of the Lane Xang Kingdom, known as the "Kingdom of a Million Elephants." This historical significance has shaped the town's cultural landscape, making it a focal point for both religious and artistic expression. The town's architecture reflects a harmonious blend of styles, with over 30 temples, known as "wats," that are among the most sophisticated in Southeast Asia. Notable examples include Wat Xieng Thong, which dates back to the 16th century and is celebrated for its intricate decorations and historical significance. The preservation of these structures is crucial, as they represent the town's cultural identity and attract tourists interested in both history and architecture. The architectural landscape of Luang Prabang presents a unique synthesis of traditional Lao temple architecture and French colonial urban planning. The city contains 33 Buddhist temples, or wats, each representing distinct periods and styles of Lao religious architecture (Berliner, 2012). The most iconic among these is Wat Xieng Thong, constructed in 1560, which exemplifies the classical Luang Prabang temple style with its sweeping, multi-tiered roofs that nearly touch the ground, intricate gold stenciling, and elaborate mosaic work depicting scenes from Buddhist cosmology and Lao folklore. The French colonial period (1893-1953) introduced European architectural elements that, rather than overwhelming the traditional aesthetic, created a harmonious blend of East and West. French administrators preserved the Buddhist temples while introducing their own administrative buildings, villas, and infrastructure (Askew, 2010). This juxtaposition of wooden Lao houses with ornate shutters alongside French colonial mansions with their characteristic arcades and verandas

creates the distinctive urban fabric that defines Luang Prabang's visual appeal today.The city's urban plan itself reflects traditional Lao cosmological principles, with temples positioned according to Buddhist sacred geography while adapting to the natural topography of the peninsula (Pholsena & Banomyong, 2006). The Royal Palace, now the National Museum, occupies a central position both geographically and symbolically, representing the traditional intersection of secular and sacred power in Lao society

Architectural Heritage

The architectural charm of Luang Prabang is one of its most appealing features. The town showcases a remarkable fusion of styles, with traditional Lao wooden structures and French colonial buildings coexisting in a picturesque setting. The Royal Palace Museum, built in 1904, exemplifies this blend, featuring both Lao and French architectural motifs. Visitors can explore its beautifully maintained gardens and view artifacts from the royal era, including the revered Phra Bang Buddha statue, which symbolizes Lao sovereignty.The temples, or wats, are not only places of worship but also masterpieces of art and architecture. Wat Xieng Thong, with its sweeping roofs and ornate decorations, is considered the quintessential example of Lao design. The temple complex includes several chapels adorned with intricate mosaics depicting scenes from Buddhist mythology, making it a must-visit for anyone interested in religious art.

Cultural Practices and Festivals

Cultural practices in Luang Prabang are deeply rooted in Buddhism, which plays a central role in the community's daily life. The morning alms-giving ceremony, where locals offer food to saffron-robed monks, is a significant tradition that draws both locals and tourists. This ritual not only reflects the spiritual life of the town but also serves as a cultural spectacle that highlights the importance of community and tradition. The ceremony typically begins at dawn, with monks walking silently through the streets, creating a serene atmosphere that captivates onlookers. Festivals in Luang Prabang, such as the Pi Mai (Lao New Year) and the That Luang Festival, further enrich the cultural tapestry of the town. These events feature traditional music, dance, and rituals that celebrate Lao heritage, providing visitors with an immersive experience of local customs and practices. The Pi Mai festival, for instance, includes water fights and parades, symbolizing purification and renewal, while the That Luang Festival involves the procession of sacred relics and vibrant celebrations.

Buddhist Artistic Traditions and Religious Practices

Buddhism permeates every aspect of Luang Prabang's cultural identity, and the artistic expressions of this faith constitute a primary source of the city's appeal. The daily alms-giving ceremony, or tak bat, where hundreds of saffron-robed monks walk through the streets at dawn to collect offerings from residents and visitors, represents a living tradition that connects contemporary practice to centuries-old Buddhist customs (Schedneck, 2019). This ritual has become iconic, embodying the spiritual dimension of Luang Prabang's cultural appeal.The Buddhist artistic heritage of Luang Prabang is most spectacularly displayed in temple murals, Buddha statuary, and religious manuscripts. The murals of Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham depict Jataka tales and scenes from the Ramayana with intricate detail, using natural pigments and gold leaf application techniques passed down through generations. These visual narratives serve both devotional and educational purposes, preserving Buddhist teachings and Lao cultural stories in accessible visual form (Denes, 2006).The Phra Bang, the city's namesake Buddha image believed to have been created in Sri Lanka in the 1st century CE, represents the spiritual heart of Luang Prabang. This golden Buddha statue, standing 83 centimeters tall, has become a symbol of Lao national identity and religious devotion, housed in the Royal Palace Museum and brought out for public veneration during the Lao New Year festival (Stuart-Fox, 1998). The reverence accorded to this artifact demonstrates how religious objects transcend mere aesthetic appeal to embody collective cultural memory and identity.

Artistic Expression

The arts in Luang Prabang extend beyond architecture and festivals. The Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC) serves as a vital resource for understanding the diverse ethnic groups in Laos, showcasing traditional crafts, textiles, and artworks. This center not only preserves the artistic heritage of the region but also promotes awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity that characterizes Luang Prabang. Visitors can participate in workshops to learn about traditional weaving and pottery, gaining hands-on experience of the local crafts.Moreover, the town's vibrant night market is a testament to its artistic spirit, offering handmade crafts, textiles, and local art. This market not only supports local artisans but also allows visitors to engage with the culture through the purchase of unique, culturally significant items. The market is a lively hub where one can find everything from intricate silk scarves to beautifully crafted wooden sculptures, reflecting the rich artistic traditions of the region.

Challenges and Preservation Efforts

Despite its charm and appeal, Luang Prabang faces challenges related to rapid tourism development. The influx of visitors has led to concerns about the preservation of its cultural and architectural heritage. Efforts are being made to balance tourism with conservation, ensuring that the town's unique identity is maintained for future generations. Local authorities are implementing regulations to protect historical sites and promote sustainable tourism practices, aiming to minimize the impact of commercialization on the town's cultural landscape.

Cultural Economy, Craft, Creative Tourism and Youth Engagement

The interweaving of arts and culture with economic activity is a key aspect of Luang Prabang's appeal. The presence of night markets, craft boutiques, and artisan studios means that cultural heritage becomes accessible and interactive. The craft sector becomes a site of community-based economic models where artisans and youth engage in creative ecosystems. Ritual, Everyday Culture, Spatial Experience is the early-morning alms-giving ceremony (Tak Bat) provides a unique visual and cultural experience. Numerous temples, murals, religious artefacts and community life around them add layers of intangible culture and ritual practice. The city's layout—with rivers, hills, and townscape—adds to the experiential dimension of cultural tourism.

Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development

While the appeal is strong, challenges include authenticity vs commodification, youth engagement, and tourism pressures. Opportunities lie in youth-centred creative tourism, community mapping, digital promotion, and sustainable craft models. Implications for Research Frameworks is independent variables include heritage architecture quality and youth engagement; dependent variables include visitor satisfaction and artisan income. Evaluation matrices and risk assessments can be used to monitor impacts and sustainability of cultural tourism..

Traditional Crafts and Artisan Culture

Luang Prabang's reputation as a center for traditional Lao craftsmanship significantly contributes to its cultural appeal. The city maintains living traditions in textile weaving, silversmithing, wood carving, and paper making that have been practiced for centuries. The textile tradition is particularly renowned, with Luang Prabang silk and cotton textiles featuring distinctive patterns and natural dye techniques that distinguish them from other Southeast Asian textile traditions (Cheesman, 1988).The traditional Lao textile technique of supplementary weft weaving, used to create intricate geometric and figurative patterns, represents sophisticated technical knowledge passed through generations of predominantly female weavers. Organizations such as Ock Pop Tok have worked to preserve these techniques while creating sustainable economic opportunities for local artisans, demonstrating how cultural preservation can align with contemporary economic development (Ivarsson & Goscha, 2007).

Silversmithing represents another significant craft tradition in Luang Prabang. Lao silversmiths create intricate betel nut boxes, offering bowls, jewelry, and decorative items using techniques including repoussé, chasing, and filigree work. These items serve both utilitarian and ceremonial purposes, particularly in Buddhist rituals and traditional Lao life cycle ceremonies. The preservation of these metalworking traditions maintains not only technical skills but also the cultural knowledge embedded in the symbolic meanings and appropriate uses of these objects.

The production of saa paper from mulberry bark represents an ancient craft that has experienced revival in recent decades. This traditional papermaking process, used historically for Buddhist manuscripts and temple decorations, now supplies both religious needs and a growing market for handicrafts. The revival of saa paper production demonstrates how traditional crafts can adapt to new markets while maintaining authentic production methods and cultural significance (Berliner, 2012).

Performing Arts and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The performing arts tradition of Luang Prabang encompasses classical Lao dance, traditional music, and oral literary traditions that embody the city's intangible cultural heritage. The Royal Ballet of Luang Prabang, which performed for the royal court until the monarchy's abolition in 1975, has been revived in recent years, preserving classical dance forms that interpret Buddhist stories and Lao legends through highly stylized movement and gesture (Pholsena & Banomyong, 2006).Traditional Lao music, performed on instruments including the khene (bamboo mouth organ), ranat (xylophone), and saw (bowed string instruments), provides the sonic landscape for religious ceremonies, festivals, and secular celebrations. The khene holds particular cultural significance as the national instrument of Laos, capable of producing complex polyphonic melodies that some ethnomusicologists consider unique in Southeast Asian music traditions (Miller & Chonpairot, 1994).

The oral tradition of mor lam, combining poetry, music, and storytelling, represents another dimension of Luang Prabang's intangible heritage. Though more commonly associated with rural Lao and northeastern Thai culture, mor lam performances in Luang Prabang connect urban cultural life to broader regional traditions while adapting to the city's specific cultural context (Askew, 2010).

Festivals provide crucial occasions for the public performance and transmission of these artistic traditions. The Lao New Year (Pi Mai) celebration in April transforms the city into a stage for traditional music, dance, and ritual performances. The Boat Racing Festival, coinciding with the end of Buddhist Lent, combines religious ceremony with athletic competition and cultural performance, demonstrating the integration of arts within the broader social and religious calendar (Schedneck, 2019).

Cultural Preservation and Contemporary Challenges

The preservation of Luang Prabang's cultural heritage faces complex challenges in the 21st century, balancing conservation with development, authenticity with adaptation, and local needs with tourist expectations. The rapid growth of tourism since the 1990s has created both opportunities and threats to cultural sustainability. While tourism provides economic resources for heritage conservation and creates markets for traditional crafts, it also generates pressures for commercialization, commodification of traditions, and disruption of authentic cultural practices (Berliner, 2012).The UNESCO World Heritage designation has provided a framework for conservation but has also imposed restrictions and generated debates about appropriate development. The requirement to maintain the "outstanding universal value" of the site has led to regulations governing building heights, architectural styles, and land use that sometimes conflict with residents' desires for modernization and economic development (Logan, 2012). This tension reflects broader questions about who has authority to define and preserve culture, and whose interests' heritage conservation serves.The transformation of traditional Lao houses into guesthouses, restaurants, and shops has altered the social fabric of the historic center. While this adaptive reuse preserves architectural structures, it changes their social meaning and function. Some scholars argue this represents an inevitable evolution of living heritage, while others lament the loss of authentic residential community life in the historic core (Askew, 2010).

Cultural sustainability requires attention not only to physical conservation but also to the transmission of knowledge and skills to younger generations. The appeal of modern education and urban careers has reduced interest among young Lao people in learning traditional crafts and artistic practices. Organizations working on cultural preservation have developed programs combining traditional knowledge transmission with contemporary applications, attempting to make cultural heritage economically viable and socially relevant for new generations (Ivarsson & Goscha, 2007).The challenge of maintaining authentic religious practices while accommodating tourist observation represents another dimension of contemporary cultural preservation. The transformation of the morning alms ceremony into a tourist spectacle has raised concerns about the commodification of sacred ritual. Guidelines have been developed to promote respectful observation, but the presence of hundreds of tourists daily inevitably alters the nature of this intimate religious practice (Schedneck, 2019).

Conclusion

The appeal of arts and culture in Luang Prabang derives from a complex interweaving of tangible and intangible heritage elements that have evolved over centuries while maintaining distinctive Lao cultural identity. The city's architectural synthesis of Buddhist temple design and French colonial urbanism creates a visually stunning environment that serves as more than mere backdrop,it embodies historical processes of cultural exchange and adaptation. The Buddhist artistic traditions, from golden temple murals to daily ritual practices, provide spiritual depth that distinguishes Luang Prabang from destinations offering only secular cultural attractions.

Traditional crafts and performing arts represent living connections to ancestral knowledge and techniques, maintaining cultural continuity while adapting to contemporary contexts. The challenge facing Luang Prabang is sustaining this living cultural heritage in the face of globalization, tourism pressures, and modernization. Success will require approaches that value local agency, support economic sustainability of cultural practices, and recognize heritage as a dynamic process rather than static preservation of the past.The global appeal of Luang Prabang's culture demonstrates the enduring human attraction to places where cultural authenticity and aesthetic beauty converge, where daily life remains connected to traditional practices, and where the pace and rhythm of existence offer alternatives to the acceleration of modern life. As both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a living city, Luang Prabang will continue to negotiate the tensions between preservation and change, local life and tourist gaze, tradition and innovation. The city's cultural appeal ultimately rests on maintaining this delicate balance while ensuring that cultural heritage serves the wellbeing and aspirations of the Lao people who are its true custodians.The appeal of arts and culture in Luang Prabang is multifaceted, encompassing its rich history, architectural beauty, vibrant cultural practices, and artistic expressions. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it stands as a testament to the successful fusion of traditional and colonial influences, making it a captivating destination for those seeking to explore the depths of Lao culture. The ongoing efforts to preserve its heritage amidst modern challenges will be crucial in maintaining the town's unique charm and cultural significance in the years to come.This expanded article provides a more comprehensive view of Luang Prabang's cultural landscape, emphasizing its historical significance,

architectural beauty, and the vibrant traditions that continue to thrive in this enchanting town.Luang Prabang's arts and cultural appeal lies in its preserved architecture, living crafts, ethnic traditions, and community-based creative economy. Sustainable and inclusive tourism .

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MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
Between
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Education,
Faculty of Social Sciences
and
Research and Academic Service Office (RASO),
National University of Laos (NUOL)

In order to promote research, academic collaboration, and various projects between, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, and the National University of Laos, fourth parties have agreed to the following Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for academic and research collaboration, as detailed below:

WHEREAS, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, and the National University of Laos share a mutual interest in establishing collaboration on academic and research development activities; hereby record their mutual understanding as follows:

1. **Objective:** The primary aim of this agreement is to foster the promotion of Buddhism and to advance mutual understanding and camaraderie between the four institutions through collaborative educational programs and exchange initiatives.
2. **Cooperation**: This agreement, contingent upon the approval of the directors and executive board of three institutions, provides a general framework for institutional collaboration. Each institution's director will appoint a designated contact unit or individuals responsible for coordinating and executing this agreement in the best interests of the fourth parties.
3. **Faculty Exchange:** The agreement supports the exchange of faculty members or the arrangement of visiting faculty to participate in teaching, cultural activities, and research related to Buddhism at both institutions. The specifics of such exchanges, including the number of participants, duration of visits, financial responsibilities, and other related matters, shall be determined through mutual agreement between the directors of four institutions.
4. **Student Exchange:** The agreement encourages the exchange of postgraduate, graduate, and undergraduate students between the two universities. The volume of exchange students shall be determined based on the needs and capacities of each institution.
5. **Special Programs:** The Parties may organize programs related to teaching, training, management, research, or conferences, provided that these programs are relevant to socio-cultural aspects of Faculties. Other mutually agreed-upon programs may also be conducted on either campus, subject to the approval of both institutions.
6. **Public Exchange:** Apart from special gifts or souvenirs, the institutions agree to exchange selected publications and photocopies of library materials of equivalent value.

7. **Funding:** The institutions may jointly or individually seek funding to support the initiatives outlined in this agreement, with mutual consent.
8. **Other Issues:** This agreement will be effective upon signature by the authorized representatives of four institutions. Any amendments or modifications require formal written consent from the authorized representative of four institutions. Issues not explicitly addressed in this agreement shall be resolved through mutual agreement, with each institution committing to make a good faith effort to reach such an agreement.
9. **Agreement:** This agreement shall be effective for a period of five (5) years from the date of signing by the authorized representatives of four institutions, subject to approval by the respective boards of management or other governing authorities. The agreement may be renewed or modified with the mutual consent of the Parties. It will be automatically extended for additional five-year periods unless either Party provides six (6) months' prior written notice of termination. This agreement is executed in duplicate, with each Party retaining one signed copy.

For and on Behalf of

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siriwat Srikhruedong
Representative of Dean, Faculty of Humanities,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Thailand

Date: Nov. 04, 2024

Assoc. Rrof. Dr. Phrakrusanghaviriyakij
Representative of Dean, Faculty of Social Science,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Thailand

Date: Nov. 04, 2024.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somchai Srinok
Representative of Dean, Faculty of Education,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Thailand

Date: Nov. 04, 2024

For and on Behalf of

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sithixay Xayavong
Director of Research and Academic Service
Office (RASO), National University of Laos
(NUOL)

Date: NOV. 04, 2024

Witnessed by

Mr. Keophouthone Hathalong
Deputy of Research Management and
Journal Promotion, RASO, NUOL
Lao People's Democratic Republic

Date: NOV. 04, 2024.

Witnessed by

Asst. Prof. Dr. Methaphan Phothitheerarot
Vice-Dean for Administrative Affairs,
Faculty of Humanities
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Thailand

Date: Nov. 04, 2024


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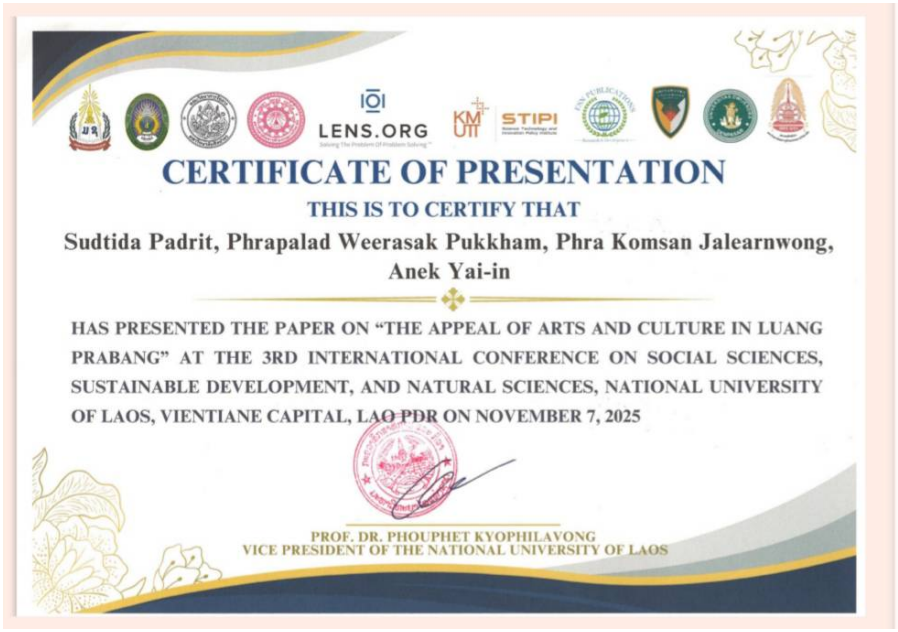
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Phongphat Chittanurak ans Soiboon Saithong members the Faculty of Social Sciences MCU, attended the ICSD 2025 NUOL International Conference on November 7, 2025, at the National University of Laos, Vientiane Capital. This attendance was a result of the signing of an Academic Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with the National University of Laos on November 4, 2024.





Phra Khru Sanghawiriyakij (Raphin Buddhisaro), Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, along with faculty members, attended the ICSD 2025 NUOL International Conference on November 7, 2025, at the National University of Laos, Vientiane Capital. This attendance was a result of the signing of an Academic Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with the National University of Laos on November 4, 2024.



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Weclome to
The 3rd International Conference on Social Sciences, Sustainable Development and Natural Sciences
Vientiane, Lao PDR.
November 7, 2025
Organized by: National University of Laos
Co-organized by:
LENS.ORG
STIPI
Venue: Latsavong Wanda Vista Hotel


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ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລແຫ່ງຊາດ
ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລແຫ່ງຊາດ
National University of Laos





On November 8, 2025, Phra Khru Sanghawiriyakij (Raphin Buddhisaro), Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, along with his Team, paid respects to Phra Maha Hwed Masenai (ມະຫາເຫວດ ມະເສໄນ), or Phra Lak Kaeo Maha Hwed, who was appointed by the Executive Committee of the Central Organization of Buddhist Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as the 7th President of the Central Organization of Buddhist Affairs (Sangharaja) of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on October 30, 2025, at Wat Sisaket, Vientiane, Lao PDR.





Phra Khru Sanghawiriyakij (Raphin Buddhisaro), Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, along with his Team, signed an Academic Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with the National University of Laos and attended the ICSD 2024 NUOL International Conference on November 4-6, 2024 at the National University of Laos, Vientiane Capital.





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Faculty of Social Sciences Order
No. 01/2026
Regarding Appointment of Qualified
Personnel to Consider Academic Works
Type: Books

In order for the consideration of academic works of lecturers in Faculty of Social Sciences, to proceed smoothly and efficiently, achieving the objectives and policies of the University,

By virtue of the authority under Section 33 of the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Act B.E. 2540, the following persons are hereby appointed as Qualified Personnel to consider academic works in the category of Books, entitled "Buddhist Integration in Political Tourism and Management" by lecturers in Faculty of Social Science. The authors are Phrapalad Raphin Buddhisaro *et al.* (1) qualified persons, including

1. Phra Udomsitthinayok, Assoc. Prof. Dr.
   Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wasana Kaewla,
   Surin Rajabhat University
3. Asst. Prof. Dr. Pornchai Naksong,
   Thaksin University
4. Prof.Dr. Phouphet Kyophilavong
   National University of Laos (NUOL)
5. Assoc.Prof.Dr.Thongphanh Chanthavong
   Souphanouvong University

From now on Ordered on May 2026

(Phra Udomsitthinayok, Assoc. Prof. Dr.)
Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences

Buddhist Integration in Political Tourism and Management

This volume brings together selected academic articles presented at the 3rd International Conference on Social Development and Natural Sciences, exploring the integration of Buddhist principles with political, tourism, management, and social development.

The contributions reflect contemporary perspectives and practical approaches that aim to promote peaceful coexistence, ethical leadership, community well-being, and sustainable development in a rapidly changing world.



The 3rd International Conference
on Social Development and Natural Sciences
November 7, 2025

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