THE MODELS OF BUDDHIST CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN MODERN THAI SOCIETY

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Abstract— This article was analyzed from research named “The well-being and social learning promotion based on Buddhism.” The objectives of this research are: 1) studying on the application of Buddhist principle in enhancing well-being and learning society with the coordination of hierarchy, 2) integrating the main concept on the principles of Buddhism and modern science to enhance well-being and society and 3) building social space and learning according to the Buddhism guideline and analyzing relationship of hierarchy, government, local administration and community organizations to enhance well-being and social learning according to the Buddhism guideline. The research methodologies rely on qualitative methods especially anthropological research methodology including in-depth interview, focus group discussion and participant observation by selective fifteen Buddhist organizations in Thailand and document researched emphasized on the concept of “Buddhist Engagement” and “Social Responsibility.”

This study found that nowadays Buddhist organization has formed three types of social responsibility. Firstly, Buddhist organization has guided community to adapted Buddha’s doctrine (especially five precepts) to use in everyday life, making well-being society and good qualities of life and develop activities with could sustain community sustainably. Secondly, Buddhist organization has employed more effective communication to share more social-Buddhist related issue. Thirdly, Buddhist organization has created activities which are practical toward society. Those could be divided into three types of formation. First, forming relation with private enterprise. Second, developing activities inside their own organization. That includes setting up co-working space with community. Third, forming relation with state organization, civil society, and local administration. Importantly, activity goal setting and truly understanding of knowledge are key to strengthen “The model of Buddhist Social Responsibility.”

The study suggested that Buddhist organization should study the need and suitability of new social service activities in their own area. That would lead to new formation of social enterprise activities e.g. setting up learning area in organization during weekend and Buddhism’s holiday, setting up visual education, and foundation. It also suggested the effective and sustainable way to create social enterprise activities. Those are creating “Space for Working” and “new generation of monks” who understand modern knowledge and be able to integrate the knowledge with the thought of Buddhism. Finally, that would help modern Thai society recognized the idea of “Buddhist Social Responsibility”.

Keywords— Buddhist Engagement, Social Responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

“...Buddhism, which is a religion of education that teaches people to train and improve themselves. This does not imply remissness on our part, but that when we are not ready, we need to develop ourselves. We must be confident to commit ourselves at the level we are able to cope. It does not mean that, as we are not ready for all of them at the same time, we simply discard them all, and just carry on like this. It turns out that for Buddhists anything goes. Everything becomes unsteady and blurred and they carry on with a feeling of vagueness and lack of self-confidence …” (PhraBrahmagunabhorn (P. A. Payutto), 2007: 30)

In Thai society, Buddhism was impact to way of life since born to die. So we should understand evolution of Buddhism as social institute. KarunaKusalasaya (2006) concluded about Buddhism in Thailand that the term “The Land of Yellow Robes” has not been inappropriately applied to Thailand, for two things strike most foreigners as well as they set to this society. First one, Buddhist temple with its characteristic architecture, and the other is the sight of yellow-clad Buddhist monks and novices who are to be seen everywhere, especially in the early hours of dawn when they go out in great numbers for alms. The two sights inevitably remind the foreigners that here is a country where Buddhism is a dominant force in culture. As well as to the Thai society and culture at all. Buddhism has been the main stream to flow its culture and thought, art and literature also with ethics and morality, and many of its folkways and festivals particularly in country side. In addition to the role of monks in rural area is more important, for there the local Buddhist temple and their belief. In Thai rural communities Buddhism is not only the religious but also the power and social control of the community. In particularly in the past Buddhist temples were when of people come together and experience a sense of belonging of community. Religious rituals and ceremonies held at Buddhist temple are always accompanied by social and culture activities: they are occasions for people, especially the young, to enjoy themselves in feast, fun and festivities. This perspective of the religious service helps the common folks to relax and satisfies their needs for recreation. So monks are one of the most venerated group in the rural Thai society, remaining very close to the hearts of the people. Many times and where, when there are crisis, it is to monks that people bring their problems for counsel and leader to make conflict reconciliation.
processes. With few exceptions, the Sangha has well justified this attitude of respect and honor shown to it on the part of the laity and, on the whole, has lived up to the dignity of the Faith.

According to James Taylor mentioned about relation between Buddhist organization and Thai community that The monasteries or temples, the spiritual heart of the community, were once the most inspiring and grandeur of sites. They are fast losing their place – like Bangkok’s once vibrant canal network – in the shadow of time (or a time that is no longer so significant). As the city and its population have grown, indeed doubled between the early 1960s-1980s, so public (green) places, such as they were, have disappeared in an expanse of concrete. In terms of material space, an increased population and need for housing and recreation also put pressure on inner-city monasteries. The inspiring Temple of Golden Mount (a landmark in inner Bangkok) can be still seen from a distance but only if travelling on the new three-land elevated expressways. In contrast, the working heart of the city has grained in symbolic significance, as a site of increasingly globalized finance. (James Taylor, 2008: 93)

In current Thai society the role of Buddhist organization was thought challenged and link with huge society reform after coup d'état in May, 2014. Their part of huge society reform its from negative thinking of Buddhist organization in many way such as conflict of interest in Buddhist temple or internal administrative. According to Nidhi Eoseewong (2013) Thai Buddhist organization have adapted since colligated in Scriptural Buddhism in era of King RAMA4. After main stream of Scriptural Buddhism declined in 1921. Buddhist organization adjusted to new ideology called “experiential Buddhism”. Its mean patterns that use Buddhist Dhamma for explain and engaged with Thai society. Finally its has an effect on many Buddhism school of teaching and practical. The new school of modern Thai society tried to interpreted Buddhist Dhamma and persuade disciple for prepared in culture and social changed.

According to NatchaMunyapho, SomdetNamket and SuvitKhawong (2013) Buddhism and Thais were closely related together for a long time in the past. The cause to make Thai people to be closely relative with Buddhism was harmonious with Thais’ characters. This is because Buddhism is not only the reasonable religion and the highest value, but also the religion of freedom, that is to say, Buddhism teaches people to be liberated and the way of life of Thai people associates intimately with, advocates and enhances Buddhism. So the Sanghas’ role with social participation descending from the past to the present are similar to the social participation because the Sanghas are closely related to the public community in the case of the spiritual leaders and strengthening the community. In conformity with Taylor (2008) concluded about Thai Buddhist adjustment that many websites now available to Thai Buddhist surfers consist of various virtual libraries, information about noted monks (living and deceased), information on Thai monasteries (national and international), commentary on controversial movement, downloadable Dhamma books, recorded Pali chanting, and numerous blogs and Web forums. In making connections to a cyber-sangha, new forms of cultural knowledge and experience imply disengagement with the material, political and social realities of place. For instance, as in the place of the local monasteries and centering of social hierarchies and the production of cultural norms.

In order that PinitLapthananon (2013) mentioned about Buddhist monks in contemporary Thai society that both distribution of Buddhist monasteries and mobility of monks in contemporary Thailand, it is necessary to first elaborate upon a classification of monasteries. At the end of the year 2011, there were 37,331 monasteries across Thailand. Of those total monasteries, 37,041 were public monasteries (including 17 ethnic Vietnamese and 14 Chinese monasteries), while 290 were established by the royal family. Under the Thai legal system, monasteries are further classified into 2 main groups. These are 22,210 temples (registered monasteries with ordination facilities), and 15,121 abbey (registered monasteries without ordination facilities) (Refer from National office of Buddhism, 2012: 6)

So consideration adjusted the role of Buddhist organization to Buddhist engagement. The study of Keyes (1989) and O’Connor (2009) two anthropologists who have many studies in Thai studied emphasized that change of power relation and Thai social structure especially Thai Buddhism. They have adapted in power repulsion of Thai history and culture. In the same way Thai state dominated modernization process of Buddhist organization. Its can prove from Sangha educational reform or changed role of Buddhist organization on Sangha act (No 2) in 2000. However the studies of Keyes (1989) and O’Connor (2009) emphasized that current Thai Buddhist organization is syncretic Buddhism. Its mean Buddhist organization has relation with community as partnership. They can help each other and participated to develop local community base on their economic culture, belief and social norm. So this study will explain practical of “Buddhist Corporate Social Responsibility in modern Thai Society” for make understanding the adjust role of Buddhist organization.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research relied on qualitative methods especially anthropological research methodology including...
in-depth Interview, focus group discussion and participant observation by selective fifteen Buddhist organizations in Thailand and document researched emphasized on the concept of “Buddhist Corporate Social Responsibility.”

III. THE CONCEPTS OF BUDDHIST CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

First of all, to understanding concept of Buddhist corporate social responsibility. We should refer to “Socially Buddhist engagement” because that concept is one of the famous when we have mentioned about Buddhist organization and development. Norberg Hodge (1997) mentioned that in the current industrial world, on the other hand, complex technologies and large-scale social institutions have led to a fundamental separation between people, as well as between humans and the living world. Since our daily lives seem to depend largely on a economic determinism world, electric power, modern transportations, logistic systems and insurance health care. For religions attitude the current economic situation attempt to amalgamate diverse economies into a so-called unified global economy reflect the Buddha's notion of interdependence. The result is sometimes passive acceptance in the face of changes that are not only counter to Buddhist values, but are fundamentally anti-life. As engaged Buddhists we have a responsibility to examine current economic trends carefully, in the light of Buddhist teachings.

So Buddhist organization has to adapted role to engage activities to social responsibility. Actually corporate social responsibility concepts have been applied for years through quality and have proven their practicality and profitability, while emphasizing sustainable performance through valuing people and society. Therefore, the right thing for business and the right thing ethically become one and the same.14 This is not a contradiction, nor is it an impossible goal. Rather, quality provides “competitive products and services of excellent and durable quality, delivered in the shortest possible time to market, at minimum cost and in a manner that emphasizes

However the concept of recent Buddhist corporate social responsibility began by understand the studies on religion and business ethics. For Buddhism, in the economic field many Buddhist teachers argue that detachment from the purely material and a focus on social and environmental responsibility in production, distribution and exchange are consistent with and indeed central to the proper practice of the faith (Norberg-Hodge, 1997). The modern Buddhism movements in the merge of culture and social change such as ThichNhat Hanh, Phradhammakosajarn (BuddhadasaBhikkhu) and Development monk networks make attraction to Thai modern society especially in urban society because of its gave a chance for modern life style to join Buddhism social welfare activities. In term of Buddhist Corporate Social Responsibility we can concluded this concept in three pillar. First Dhamma concept for society, for Buddhist teaching we can separate Dhamma concept in two main groups. The first one was Dhamma that show the fact of life such as The four noble truths, Three Characteristics and the law of dependent origination. Next was Dhamma that advice way of life to be a good person. The important Dhamma that can support and promote people to success and satisfy in life is middle path. Because people who learning and practicing under the way of middle path will develop themselves to use mindfulness and wisdom when have to fix a problem. Including control everyday life action to conform to social value and moral norm. So Dhamma concept for society accord with corporate social responsibility.

Buddhist corporate social responsibility is one of modern Buddhism that acquired scientific have an influence to other religions. There are many kinds of pattern such as socially engage Buddhism, reinterpretation, meditation, Buddhism and social change etc. However the universal responsibility is one of famous in people eyes. Because of its show the performance of religions that they always refer to their duty. So every religion try to adapted role and social welfare activities to nearly sustainable development as someone called Religion corporate social responsibility. In Buddhist way Dalai Lama (2014) concluded universal responsibility that the self-consciousness to another or develop responsibility to every action. So universal responsibility means combination of generosity and wisdom in everyday life. Including realize to do the right things and do not contrary with social moral or make social disorganization. As Bhikkhu P.A. Payutto.mentioned to Buddhist economics that this principal and practice of Buddhist economics have moderate practice. The main idea was make balancing among life quality and individual satisfaction. So Buddhist economics practical means individual satisfaction by self-responded in everyday life action. As Bhikkhu P.A. Payutto.mentioned to Buddhist that the principal and way of Buddhist have moderate practice. The main idea was balancing among everyday life action and individual satisfaction. So Buddhist way means individual satisfaction by self-consciousness in everyday life action. Like Buddha teaching that passions have two perspectives were: satiate material and life well-being.

PhramahaSuthitApakaro (2013) concluded that Buddhist corporate social responsibilities in modern Thai society will success in three main factors that are: 1) good leadership. The leader should have great knowledge, vision, discipline, and organizational ability. The leader must be an expert in the practice and propagation of Buddhism 2) various
organizational factors – including good administration machinery, and sufficient funds, and 3) External factors that include promotion of the Sangha community in the province, region, and country, and establishment of associations and government sector involvements.

**IV. RESULT**

The models of Buddhist corporate social responsibility in modern Thai Society have many patterns. By the way, the most famous reference form is used Buddhist Dhamma to explain with the contemporary world. In order that Buddhist corporate social responsibility always dedicated like social welfare but advance and realized to sustainable development more than the past. As for this study, we can show that: Firstly nowadays Buddhist organization has formed three types of cooperate social responsibility. Firstly, Buddhist organization has guided community to adapted Buddha’s doctrine (especially five precepts) to use in everyday life, making well-being society and good qualities of life and develop activities with could sustain community sustainably. First, the Buddhist organization has guided community to adapted Buddha’s doctrine (especially five precepts) to use in everyday life, making well-being society and good qualities of life and develop activities with could sustain community sustainably:

**The models of Buddhist Cooperate Social Responsibility**

Secondly, Buddhist organization has employed more effective communication to share more social-Buddhist related issue. Nowadays the Buddhist organization aware that communication and effective descrid Buddhist Dhamma or the way to applied in everyday life is very important to make their a recognition to society. Most of Buddhist organization that emphasize social communication will start by leader’s vision. Nowadays the social media such as facebook, websites and pocket books are famous for expand faith and members. Particularly middle class in modern Thai society, the communication and particles of Buddhist organization can respond their mind. The explanation about Dhamma and the way of practical has relevance for modern way of life. Moreover the physical area of modern Buddhist organization design for learning that is clean area, intercalate Dhamma to people and manage Buddhist activities under moderate practice. Thirdly, Buddhist organization has created activities which are practical toward society. Those could be divided into three types of formation. First, forming relation with private enterprise. Second, developing activities inside their own organization. That includes setting up co-working space with community. Third, forming relation with state organization, civil society, and local administration. Importantly, activity goal setting and truly understanding of knowledge are key to strengthen of Buddhist Social Responsibility.

![Diagram of the models of Buddhist Cooperate Social Responsibility](chart.png)

**The Buddhist Dhamma to develop society.**

- The Five Precepts
- The Four Noble Truths
- The Four bases of social solidarity
- The Conditions of Welfare
- The Four Cultivations (Bhavana)
- The Folk wisdom
- Sangha activity
- The Threefold Training

**Results**

- To promote personal ethics
- To develop people so they are beautiful in body, speech and wisdom
- To develop the intelligence of individual and community
- To create the benefits for oneself and society
- To preserve the cultural arts
- To create the unity of group
- To promote the well-being
- To support sustainable social development

REFERENCES


