

The Development of Management Systems and Networks for Buddhist Organizations in Thailand

Dr. Phramaha Suthit Oboun,

Director of Buddhist Research Institute,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok Thailand

suthito@hotmail.com

Professor Sarwade W.K.

Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Management Science
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad
India

Introduction

This aim of this research is to highlight the importance of personal and organizational development for the Buddhist Sangha and Buddhist organizations. The Sangha and members of Buddhist organizations have the vital roles of propagating Buddhism, acting as spiritual leaders, and developing Thai society. The research discusses the development of Buddhist study and practice on the one hand, and life quality on the other. The Sangha and Buddhist Organizations need management systems that are up-to-date and able to adapt to changing social conditions. Efficient and flexible systems are very necessary for the carrying out of the Buddha's dictum: "Go forth, O monks, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit and happiness of gods and men. Two should not take the same path." Well managed Sangha and Buddhist Organizations are significant contributors to society and nation. They can be of real benefit to the people, and help to ensure their health and happiness.

There are four objectives of this research, and they are:

1. to study the models and processes of management and human resource development described in the literature, and those used in the real world by key Buddhist organizations
2. To develop models for management and human resources development based on the research and in accord with the Buddhadhamma
3. To study the development of quality of life
4. To develop policy to strengthen the networks and the management processes of Buddhist organizations in Thailand in accord with various models. Parameters of study include concepts, processes, and management machinery.

The main purpose of the study is study and design models that have a base in the Buddhahamma that can be used to improve the development of learning, human resources, and organizations. The broader aims are to strengthen the Sangha and Thai society.

The Method of Research

Two types of research methods were used in this; field work and documentary. Some of the field work was participatory in nature. The documentary study involved collecting and studying data from documents and related books such as research reports, journals, minutes, photographs, newspapers and textbooks. The research involved a detailed look at five groups

of Buddhist organizations that operate in four regions of Thailand, namely Chiang Rai, Kanchanaburi, Nakhon Sawan and Nakhon Ratchasima.

The groups are:

1. Temples and organizations that specialize in propagation of Buddhadhamma in practice. Included are Suanmokkhapalaram temple, Nong Pah Phong temple, Luang Pho Sod temple, the Dhammakaya temple, and the Santi Asoka temple.

2. Sangha groups that work for social development. Such groups work together with local communities around the country. Included are the Ven. Phra Subin Panito's Sacca Sasom Sab, Wat Phra Pat Namphu, and other Sangha groups which aim to develop society and community in the north of Thailand and elsewhere.

3. Sangha groups and Buddhist organization that propagate the Buddhadhamma through social media. These are sometimes considered part of the New Buddhist Movement and include Satire Dhammasathan, the Institute of Vimuttayalai (W. Vajiramedhi), the Plum Village group (Thich Nhat Hanh), and Zen Buddhism Groups (Chinese-Japanese). Also included are organizations with modern scientific management systems that are involved in cooperative educational projects with private and public organizations in Thailand.

4. Sangha and educational Buddhism organizations that are part of the traditional system of Thai Sangha education including Pariyatti-dhamma Pali and Dhamma studies groups, Pariyatti-dhamma elementary education groups, two Buddhist Sangha Universities, and various educational welfare groups (e.g., Sakeaw temple in Anghong province) which emphasize both formal and informal Buddhist education.

5. The official Sangha Administration Organization which operates according to the Sangha Acts. It administers the Sangha down to the sub-district level throughout the country.

After data collection and compilation, an in-depth analysis of the data was performed. Parameters studied included chief concepts, principles, background, models, applications of Buddhadhamma, and management styles. The results of both document and field research study were summarized and prepared for presentation to public and private organizations, the Sangha Community, and other interested parties.

The Results of Study

1. Temples and organizations that specialize in propagation of Buddhadhamma in practice

The research suggests that all the members of this group have the same aim of propagating the Buddhadhamma in a practical way. Such groups:

1) Actively propagate the Buddhadhamma and its practice. This normally involves clear explanation of the important principles followed by practical application.

2) Place an emphasis on mental and intellectual development according to the Threefold Training (Ti-Sikkha), the practice of mindfulness on breathing, the four foundations of mindfulness, the movement of body and mind, and achievement of Vijja Dhammakaya.

3) promote the development of the knowledge of Buddhist principles, and apply such knowledge to the solution of every day problems. The aim is that people will get freedom and peace of mind.

- 4) Aim to improve people's quality of life. Some groups focus on helping people to live simply and correctly; others focus on Dhamma principles aimed at reducing mental impurities.
- 5) Try to build better societies through building better individuals.
- 6) Promote community and societal development through training and charity schemes.
- 7) Encourage individuals to realize the truth through practice and to perform their societal duties.

The research also suggests that the Buddhadhamma-Practice groups operate on the basis of three main process models: 1) management according to Dhamma-Vinaya. 2) Management according to the Sangha Administration Acts and 3) Strategic administration aimed at achieving the goal of propagation of Buddhadhamma in a practical way.

The research further suggests that that the Buddhadhamma-Practice groups encourage the practices of Mindfulness of Breathing, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, and the Threefold Training in order that people develop themselves and in doing so benefit society.

Factors that influence Buddhadhamma-Practice groups: The study finds that there are two types of factors relevant here, one type is internal, the other external. The internal factors are the administrative practices that are derived from the principles of Buddhism. Such factors describe the administration system clearly and include details of how the system operates, system structure, and delegation of labor. External factors include the promotion of Sangha Community in the provincial region, networking with various regions especially the practical and academic way, development of information technology and media which is interesting, appropriate and easily understood. There are other external factors such as the provision of comfortable study and living quarters, food facilities, and convenience of location that are important.

2. Sangha groups that work for social development

The research suggests that the aims of Sangha groups that work for social development include the propagation of Buddhism, social development, environment conservation, community welfare management, and social welfare. Such groups:

- 1) propagate Buddhism by the way of social development activities
- 2) apply the Buddhadhamma to the management of natural and environmental resource
- 3) develop and restore natural environments and communities. They promote the concepts of sustainable development
- 4) do community welfare management schemes such as the establishment of savings groups
- 5) Restore Buddhism and reform the Sangha Community. Stress is placed upon living humbly, and in balance with society
- 6) promote spirituality and prayer
- 7) manage alternative education and provide assistance to the disadvantaged
- 8) care for AIDS patients
- 9) communicate religious principles, develop new versions of rituals appropriate to the present
- 10) manage cultural arts and folk wisdom that can improve people's way of life

- 11) promote peace and peaceful ways of living
- 12) develop the potential of the Sangha and social networks
- 13) present models of social development based on Buddhadhamma
- 14) treat people with drug problems, and run anti-drug use programs
- 15) promote and develop youth
- 16) preserve folk wisdom and cultural arts
- 17) promote inter-religious understanding
- 18) develop social networks with the aim of improving quality of life

The Sangha groups that work for social development strive to build strong communities that operate in a sustainable fashion. The members of the community develop themselves in a very positive direction as they perform their duties; they become social-minded, strong, self-reliant, and good.

The research suggests that the Sangha groups that work for social development do so on the basis of four administrative models, 1) management according to Buddhadhamma principles, 2) management according to Sangha duty, 3) management according to burden and goal (activity and network), and 4) the area administration.

The Sangha groups that work for social development do so by applying the principles of the Buddhadhamma to development of individuals and society.

The research identifies three main factors that are important to the success of the management of Sangha and Buddhist group social activities. They are: 1) internal administrative practices that are derived from the principles of Buddhism 2) community participation and relationships, and 3) external factors such as the promotion of the Sangha Community in the provincial region. There are also others such the exchange of learning, the network of working in development and cultural arts, support from scholarships, research, and the use of public communication.

3. Sangha groups and Buddhist organization that propagate the Buddhadhamma through social media (the new Buddhist groups in Thai Society).

The research finds that Sangha groups and Buddhist organizations that use social media aim to propagate Buddhism, development individuals internally by dhamma, create peace in society, development families and society, communication to the public heart, and create unity through practice of the Buddhist principles and universal intellect. Such groups:

- 1) Do study and research, and then engage in public dialogue, dhamma talks
- 2) Promote meditation, which is the basis of individual and societal peace
- 3) Apply the Buddhadhamma to solve Thai societal, environmental, individual, and world problems
- 4) engage in exchange of ideas with others, and try to overcome conflicts with other Buddhist sects and religions
- 5) Help individuals to be free from suffering
- 6) Development happy families
- 7) Build strong and peaceful communities
- 8) Encourage people to see the truth and apply the dhamma in daily life.
- 9) Help individuals to develop in positive ways and live good and happy lives

The research suggests that Sangha groups and Buddhist organization that propagate the Buddhadhamma through social media operate on the basis of three models of management process 1) administration according to Dhamma-Vinaya, 2) administration of social media, and 3) the administration of universal intellect.

The groups that use social media apply the Buddhadhamma to personal and societal growth and development. They use modern science and technology to promote social solidarity and social harmony.

The research identifies three main factors that are important to the success of the management of Sangha groups and Buddhist organization that propagate the Buddhadhamma through social media. They are: 1) a sound knowledge of modern science and social media 2) a good network and 3) external factors such as public exposure, participation of international associations, learning exchange with the young generation, cultural art for communication, support from scholarships, and the use of public communication.

4) Sangha and educational Buddhist organizations that are part of the traditional system of Thai Sangha education

This study suggests that this group of organizations play a strong role in the management of Buddhist education. They are heavily involved in developing studies in Pali and Dhamma at secondary schools, Sangha Buddhist Universities, and research.

The traditional system of Thai Sangha education management is about using Buddhist education and modern science to foster individual and societal growth. Such groups:

- 1) manage Buddhist education, its integration with modern science, and the development of mind and society
- 2) manage Tipitaka studies and higher education for Buddhist monks, novices, and laypeople
- 3) create relationships between various in international Buddhist organizations
- 4) foster research and development done in various Buddhist Organizations
- 5) promote local and international Buddhist social services
- 6) help to preserve culture and the arts
- 7) open up opportunities for people to study Buddhism, and try to continuously improve the quality of education to Buddhist monks, novices, and laypeople
- 8) manage Pali and Dhamma studies in the the Pariyattidhamma Schools, in the secondary school for Buddhist monks, novices, and laypeople
- 9) improve the Sangha members' level of knowledge in the areas of Pali, Dhamma and modern science
- 10) explore new dimensions of Buddhist education
- 11) develop the abilities of monks and so they can be of more benefit to the broader society, and be better able to sustain the national, religious and royal institutions.

The traditional Sangha education groups operate on the basis of three models. They are: 1) administration according to Dhamma-Vinaya 2) administration according to Sangha administration, and 3) administration according to educational administration.

The traditional Sangha education groups apply the Buddhadhamma principles to personal, Sangha and societal development. The research suggests that the groups promote the study of Buddhist principles, modern science, the history of religion, philosophy of the living

and educational professionalism. Organizational development and educational management are the key to producing heirs of the Buddhist tradition and good citizens.

The research identifies two main factors that are important to the success of the management of traditional Sangha educational organizations. They are: 1) internal factors of the temple or educational organization that include a good administration system, standard knowledge, and academic service to society 2) the external factors, which include the promotion of the Sangha community in the provincial region and nation, support from the government sector, and the development of information systems and educational management.

5. The official Sangha Administration Organization which operates according to the Sangha Acts.

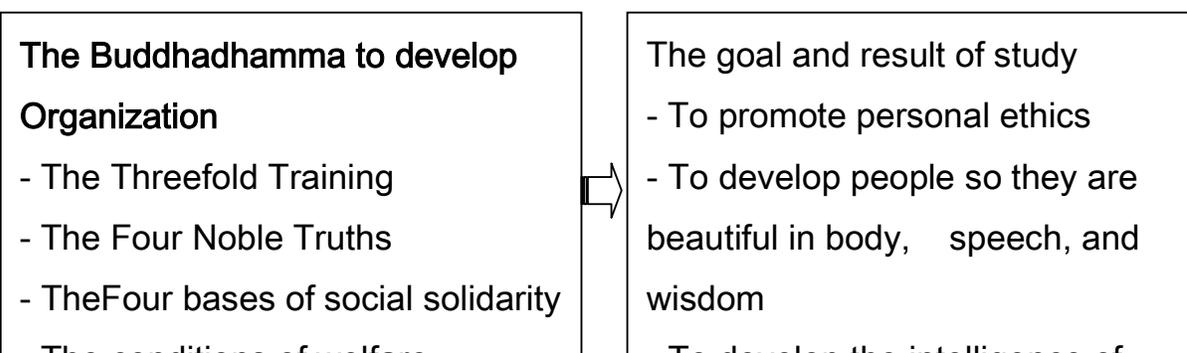
The researchers studied the Sangha groups and Sangha communities that operate according to the Sangha Acts in the four provinces of Chiangrai, Nakorn Sawan, Kanchanaburi, and Nakhonratchasima.

The research shows that these groups have the role and duty to manage Buddhist activity. Their aim is the propagation and preservation of Buddhism according to the Dhamma and Vinaya. Their activities can be described as follows. The official Sangha Administrative organizations:

- 1) follow the Dhamma - Vinaya and regulations of the Sangha community
- 2) maintain the orderliness of the Sangha Community
- 3) manage religious education, and the propagation of Buddhism
- 4) promote welfare education
- 5) assist in the management of public property
- 6) manage public aid
- 7) manage and preserve cultural arts, Buddhist wisdom natural resources and the environment
- 8) help with communal and societal development

The Sangha Act based administrative organizations operate on the basis of three models namely, 1) administration according to Dhamma-Vinaya, 2) administration according to Sangha administration, and 3) the administration of facilitation.

The research indicates that these organizations apply various principles of the Buddhadhamma into their administration of the personal and societal. The most important principles are the Threefold Training, the bases of social solidarity, the sublime states of mind, the four prejudices, and the the conditions of welfare. The aims are to create and maintain an efficient Sangha administration, develop intelligent and compassionate personnel, develop the cultural arts in the provinces, and development a caring society. The Buddhadhamma principles and ideal results of the incorporation of those principles are as follows:



The research identifies three main factors that are important to the success of the management of the Sangha Act based administrative organizations. They 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 involvement.

Suggestions: The improvement of Sangha management and the development of better management systems can lead to better Buddhist organizations in Thailand. Better administration is a vital part of the creation of improved Buddhist educational institutions. In Thailand, Buddhist education takes place in a wide range of places, including the temple, meditation retreat, school, university, and home. It is indeed one of the most important institutions in the Kingdom. The Sangha community of course plays a vital role in Thai society, and its health is in many ways linked to the health of the Kingdom. A well-administered and well-educated Sangha can inspire the faith of the people; and the faith of the people is a basic necessity for the development of Buddhism. If the Sangha community's administration and educational systems are functioning well, and if their systems are run in accord with the Dhamma-Vinaya, the Sangha should flourish, and it should be a great contributor to the physical, mental and spiritual health of Thailand.

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