

# **The Usage of Buddhist Teachings to Support self-reliant Community Enterprise in Moon River Group of Thatum District in Surin Province**

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## **Abstract**

The study of usage of Buddhist teachings to support self-reliant community enterprise in Moon River group of Thatum District in Surin Province has three objectives; they are to study the Buddhist teachings, the techniques, and the result of the Buddhist teaching usage to support self-reliant community. It's the qualitative research. The research methodology comprises survey primary information, instruction and checking the validity of the research tools, data collection, examination of the data correction, analysis the data, and writing a report. The results are found as follows; the Buddhist Teachings applied to support self-reliant community enterprise are the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara), the Conditions of Welfare (Aparihaniyadhamma), the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma), the Virtues for a Good Household Life (Gharavasa-dhamma), the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma), the Fourfold Division of Money (Bhogavibhaga), and the House-life Happiness (Gihisukha). Those mentioned Buddhist teachings support the administration of group and membership, the marketing and customers management, the management of production and production support, the management of accounting and finance, and the management of improvement and sustainable development; the techniques in Buddhist Teaching usage to support self-reliant community enterprise are usually applied to cultivate, combine, and mix in all activity processes of community enterprise such as the administration of group and members, the marketing and customers management, the management of production and production support; the result of the Buddhist Teaching usage to support self-reliant community enterprise brings cooperation, harmony, integrity, reliability, sacrifice, perseverance, patience, happiness, stability, ingenuity, capacity, wide perspective, analysis, goal, working skill, and working network to the customers and members. All are clearly supported to strengthen self-reliant community enterprise.

## **Introduction**

In the agricultural society, people relied mainly on religious belief, nature, simplicity, brotherhood, and mutual helping. But when the world entered into a new era, i.e. the age of capitalism and the consumerism, people tended to rely mainly on material belief. It brings indifference, breakage, and intense competition to people. Human life under the said era is very complicated, difficult, and full of suffering.

In fact, capitalism is only one of the economic systems set up to deal with some problems of humans, but then it turned out to create problems for the people themselves. How can Thai society escape the current turmoil? One of the several approaches used to solve the problem is known as "the community economy". Its main principles are: (1) the stable and recognized merging of farmers in the community economy (2) the promotion of local wisdom and the development of the ability in management (3) the strong community economy and being ready for competition in the future.<sup>1</sup> Its brief concept is to make community in self-reliance. For the most suitable way, the researcher suggests to turn back

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<sup>1</sup> สำนักงานเลขานุการคณะกรรมการส่งเสริมวิสาหกิจชุมชน. วิสาหกิจชุมชนน่ารู้

to the Buddhist philosophy which is conventional wisdom to the Thai people. Thai people can apply Buddhist principles in all activities of life. Community enterprise, for example, is the activity emphasized on the economy, comprising various Buddhist principles such as the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma),<sup>2</sup> the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma),<sup>3</sup> and the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma),<sup>4</sup> etc.

Though the people of Thatum are different in races comprising Khmer, Laos, and Kui, but they live together peacefully fastened by typical tradition and culture. Buddhist temples are the centres of the traditional and cultural heritages. Buddhist monks play very important role in Dhamma supporting to community's activities. Communities in Moon river group had effectively achievement in running the community enterprise. Therefore, it's very interesting to study how they applied the Buddhist teachings to support self-reliant community enterprise.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is the qualitative research using group discussion and individual interview. The study procedures are as follows;

1. The studies and information survey are divided into two processes, comprising (1) analytical study and synthesize the concepts and theories related to the research title (2) survey studies the management atmosphere of the community enterprises of the natural dyed cloth weaving housewife group and the Ba community organic fertilizer group

2. Population and sample obtained in this research are divided into two groups, comprising (1) eleven related documents such as Tipitaka, commentaries, academic works, and researches (2) a group of ten specialized persons in academics and in community enterprise and a group of forty members of community enterprises in Nong Bua sub-district and Ba sub-district, Thatum District, Surin Province

3. The research instruments were implemented according to the research objectives by the researchers. They are searching recorded cards, observation form, interview form, and group discussion form. Three specialized persons verified validity of structures and contents of the research instruments. The researchers rectified the research instruments according to the specialized persons' recommends, and tried out the research instruments.

4. The procedures of data collection are as follows; (1) using searching recorded cards to collect data by summarizing, paraphrasing, or citation (2) using observation form to collect the field data by noting facts from the two placements of community enterprises i.e. Nong Bua Sub-district and Ba Sub-district (3) using interview form to collect information by in-depth interviewing from the concerned persons (4) using group discussion form to collect information from small group discussion two times

5. Data Analysis is done according to the research objectives respectively by descriptive analysis.

6. Writing a research report.

### **The Result of Research**

1. The general living conditions of the two communities are based on the Buddhist way of life. The main occupation is agriculture. The activities of community enterprise are

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<sup>2</sup> อัง. อภิสฺสฺสฺก. (ไทย) ๒๓/๕๔/๓๔๐-๓๔๔.

<sup>3</sup> อัง. ติก. (ไทย) ๒๐/๒๙/๑๗๘-๑๘๐.

<sup>4</sup> ที. ปา. (ไทย) ๑๑/๒๗หน้า/[๔๖-๔๗]

found that there are various groups such as the group of savings, the group of drug banks, the group of organic farming, the group of a clay pot, the group of water supply, the group of cattle keeping, the group of the demonstration of the market planning, the group of the rice bank, the group of basketry, the group of traditional drug,<sup>5</sup> the group of women weaving and dyeing, the group of sewing,<sup>6</sup> and the group of mills, etc. The difference of the two communities is that community of Ba group is stronger and more stable than the community of Hnong Bua group. However, The two communities are facing changes into something new.

2. The Buddhist Teachings applied to support self-reliant community enterprise in Moon River Group of Thatum District, Surin Province, in according to the five aspects of the Community Enterprise Principles, are as follows; 1) the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara), and the Conditions of Welfare (Aparihaniyadhamma) are mostly used in the administration of group and membership, 2) the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma), the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara), the Virtues for a Good Household Life (Gharavasa-dhamma), and the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma) are mostly used in the marketing and customers management, 3) the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara), and the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma) are mostly used in the management of production and production support, 4) the Virtues for a Good Household Life (Gharavasa-dhamma), the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma), the Fourfold Division of Money (Bhogavibhaga), the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma), the House-life Happiness (Gihisukha) are mostly used in the management of accounting and finance, 5) the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Virtues for a Good Household Life (Gharavasa-dhamma), the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma), and the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma) are mostly used in the management of improvement and sustainable development.

3. The techniques in Buddhist Teaching usage to support self-reliant community enterprise in Moon River Group of Thatum District, Surin Province, are usually applied to cultivate, combine, and mix in all the five activity process of community enterprise i.e. the administration of group and members, the marketing and customers management, the management of production and production support, the management of accounting and finance, and the management of improvement and sustainable development.

4. The result of the Buddhist Teaching usage to support self-reliant community enterprise in Moon River Group of Thatum District, Surin Province, has brought about advantages to the community enterprise i.e. 1) to make the members have the cooperation, harmony, integrity, reliability, and sacrifice in the administration of group and members 2) to create the members and customers' confidence and reliability in the marketing and customers management 3) to make the members have the perseverance, patience, ingenuity, sacrifice, and wide vision in the management of production and production support 4) to make the members have the integrity, sincerity, accuracy, mutual reliance, delineation, wide vision, and happiness in the management of accounting and finance 5) to develop the members in terms of capacity, opinion, perspective, analysis, harmony, working network, and human mercy in the management of improvement and sustainable development.

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<sup>5</sup>พระครูสุคนธ์ศีลากร. เจ้าอาวาสวัดโพธิ์หิมวันต์. สัมภาษณ์ ๑๘ มีนาคม ๒๕๕๔.

<sup>6</sup>นางสาวเรวรงค์ ศรีชะอุม. ผู้ประสานงานมูลนิธิการศึกษาเพื่อชีวิตและสังคม. สัมภาษณ์ ๒๕ มีนาคม ๒๕๕๔.

## Critics

In general view, the organic farming community enterprises of communities of Ba and Hnong Bua are the local way of life based on the Theravada Buddhist cultures. The merging of various groups are stable and be ready to struggle in the stream of materialism. The communities are keen in applying the Buddhist teachings to their enterprises. The Buddhist teachings applied in the support of community enterprise are the Four Necessities of Life (Paccaya), the Virtues of the Righteous (Sappurisa-dhamma), the Holy Abidings (Brahmavihara), the Qualities of a Successful Businessman (Papanika-dhamma), the House-life Happiness (Gihisukha), the Virtues Conductive to Benefits in the Present (Ditthadhammidattha-samvatanika-dhamma), the Virtues for a Good Household Life (Gharavasa-dhamma), and the Conditions of Welfare (Aparihaniyadhamma). The results of applying Buddhist teachings in support of community enterprise brings strength and stability to the administration of group and members, the marketing and customers management, and the improvement and sustainable development. Thai Buddhist way of life in the world today are living under capitalism which is the main factor in determining the conditions for things to go on. The traditional way of life of Thai society is likely to disappear from the community. Everything must come by using money i.e. the currency exchange system. The community enterprise is one of the local wisdoms suitable to the communities.

The community enterprise has also its own weakness because the capitalist system is the system that the bigger destroying the smaller business, this phenomenon is oriented to the other physical structure, that is the core Buddhist teachings to get immunity in order to survive in any situation.

## Recommendations

From the studies, the researchers have following suggestions; 1) the Bureau of the Community Enterprise Supporting, Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, Community Development Department in Surin province, the Surin Religious Affairs, Ministry of Surin Cultures, and the Sangha Order of Surin can bring knowledge from this research to the policy framework. 2) Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalay University should focus on building Buddhist knowledge in community development 3) In practice, the main problem of community enterprise is the lack in community enterprise management and the knowledge of Buddhism. The university should raise awareness the students to work in rural communities, to develop local communities, and to strengthen the Buddhists in the periphery.

## Acknowledgement

This research has completed with the cooperation of various persons. The researcher would like to thank the following persons who gave the facility in placement of data collection, consisting of the Director of the Buddhist Research Institute for supporting of the budget; the administrative of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Surin campus for supporting of the research devices; Phrakhrusukhonsilakorn, the abbot of Wat Pho Himawan; Phrakhruprathumphattanaphorn, and the abbot of Wat Champa Hnongbua. The researchers also would give special thanks to the experts, academics, village chief, community head, presidents of the Sub-district administration of Ba and Hnongbua, and members of the community enterprise in the group of women weaving and dyeing for their data giving. Last but not least, thanks should be given to my colleagues and others whom aren't named.

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