

Buddhist Wisdom Health Care Identities in the Cultural Geography of ASEAN Community

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Abstract

This research aims to study Buddhist wisdom that lines health care which becomes inter-identities of Thailand and other countries ASEAN Community. It was found that Buddhist wisdom health care is health care with a human mind, using the four noble truths and the four noble sentiments or the four of Brahma's Dharma as the conceptual framework to understand the reality of life and to develop potential of a human being. The key elements in this health care are the ability to see humanity as the holistic, the ability to see the authentic suffering knowingly, and the ability to do qualified health care in the context of cultural geography. The ultimate goal is to help everyone concerned achieve complete happiness in life.

Buddhist wisdom health care includes medical and local religious wisdom. These two kinds of wisdoms are interlinked and are the basis of cultural geography. They cover the philosophy of looking at the world, life goals, the philosophy of life, values and practice guidelines, the development of human life, health educational development, health technology, health policy, local wisdom, globalization, environment development, economic development, and social development.

Keywords Buddhist wisdom health care, identities in the cultural geography, ASEAN community.

Religions come into existence to embrace and bind human beings. We can say that all religions exist to solve human problems. Theism religions believe that the God creates and destines human life; human

beings cannot change anything, while atheistic religions believe that human beings are composed of balanced elements of nature; they can elevate their being by developing the moral goodness of the mind. The teaching of each religion is the natural lane of life. Every religion states the origin/history of human beings, the belief and the way of life to lead them to attain the ultimate goal of life. This is why the religions teaching has to lay and the practice guidelines for human beings to follow and develop their potential to finally lead the destination of life according to each religions belief.

Buddhist wisdom is originated from practicing after the Buddhist teaching principles. The wisdom consists of worldly wisdom, and Dharma wisdom. These two components are linked to the understanding of the world and life perfectly. This enables humans to see the world and life authentically and makes them able to depend on themselves and to create things beneficial to the peace for themselves, communities and social. Same people may think that the man any principles of the Dharma, which the Lord Buddha had learned through his enlightenment, for them to master. But, in fact, it is not necessary for people to know everything the Lord Buddha knew. Buddhathatbhikkhu (1986; 5) says, if what the lord Buddha knows is as many as the leaves in a forest, what we need to use to teach and to put into practice is only as a few as a handful of the leaves'. The essence of Buddhist Dharma emphasizes on determining the causes of suffering and the methods of ending it. These causes and methods are related in a reasonable way that anyone can study them rationally and can purify their mind on the way of their study; finally they can end up enlightened. It can be said that Buddhism emphasizes studying the problems inside the mind of humans who feel suffered. This essence, in fact, is the Four Noble Truth, which stay forever true and usable.

Illness seems to be the cause of suffering. That almost everybody has to endure. At present, despite of advances in science to help relieve this kind of suffering, ill people still keep their spiritual "belief" and "faith" that have been their relief for ages. There are both domestic and international researches done; the United State National Institute for Health Care Research: NIHR, for instance, studied the link between health and religion. It was found that the balance of the body was driven by a mind condition. How health caring work with faith of the East: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, etc. has attracted the Western scholars to study this kind of linkage? Research has revealed that religious people tend to be healthier and to have better decision on the way of living. Having social benefits of doing religious activities together with other people gives them self-confidence. Praying and meditating help them deal with unpleasant situation more successfully and avoid depression. This positive emotion strengthens their immune system and gives them the ability to encounter the changes in life more efficiently.

According to Buddhist belief, every human being has to face some kinds of suffering, either physical or mental forms. However, the human

beings who train themselves, using the Dharma principles taught by the Lord Buddha as medicine will find that the illness that they have can only hurt their bodies, not their mind. Sick bodies with healthy mind can still have growing and useful lives.

Therefore, this study on the health care situation practiced in the context of cultural geography of Thailand and ASEAN Community to know that the situation is like and what it should be like aimed to use the foundation data found to integrate the scientific and religious systems and create a better and more potential system that can meet human needs perfectly. It is a hope that to make a person understand the reality of life and develop the potential of being a human through health caring and illness is a policy that can turn a crisis into an opportunity

In summary, it is clear that the present health care system can only solve some parts of the problem. Buddhism can fulfill the system by adjusting the way of thinking and looking at the world and life. This is because the real problem of a human's health is a disease of his/her life.

The Four Noble Truths: Suffering, Cause of Suffering, Cessation of Suffering, and Path leading to the Cessation is a process and a rational system that can help solve human problems, or we can say it can cure life diseases. Buddhism sees the world in the same way as a doctor sees a disease. Suffering is the disease itself; the cause of Suffering is finding the cause of the disease or etiology; the Cessation of Suffering is the condition that the disease is healed; and the Path leading to the Cessation is the methods used to cure the disease (by medical therapy, maybe).

It was also found that Thailand and ASEAN Community put the emphasis on understanding the being of a human which covers Birth, Maturation, Illness and Death. This understanding is the wisdom originated since the Lord Buddha's era, and which has been studied and practiced until now. It helps fulfill the health care system with humane mind; this is what is missing in the thinking of bio-medical mechanisms. This is how this Buddhist wisdom works:

Birth: Each birth is a miracle, a great dream of mother. Some parents can change their behavior more easily for this miracle, some, for example, can quit drinking or smoking, and some may stop fast driving.

Maturation: The definitions found in many sources are likely to define it negatively, seeing it as deterioration. But we can look at it in a positive side and find this age, the reflection of wisdom and the pursuit of spiritual values which are likely to be invisible for the young. The old may enjoy following their dreams, doing what they have always wanted to do but did not have enough time, and they will prepare themselves for the end of life. These kinds of things can help reduce the burden of the hospitals have to take, admitting them in.

Illness: In social dimension, a disease is only a small part if the analysis of the relation of the disease, the wider setting. The new work opportunities are linked to a human disease. Patients are encouraged to combat the disease and to face life. This is a priceless reward or compensation for

health care providers.

Death: It is the process of understanding death by previewing life, rethinking and telling about the past of one's life such as what is lost on the way and what is the pride that she/he can fulfill her/his mental needs at the end of life.

The Four of Sentiments or The Four of Brahma's Dharma: The main virtues include compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity fair, includes a fairly regular basis, it's a good or great soul.

Finally: a health care service system is the practice dealing with human life; therefore, for the people concerned, professional knowledge and competence as well as moral and ethical standard are emphasized. If such people use virtues called the Four of Brahma's Dharma (compassion, sympathy, joy and equanimity), they will certainly be praised as high minded people and believed that they have already upgraded their level of being a human and brought prosperity to themselves and the society as well.

This study is a qualitative research. The study was made through documentary research and field research. The summary of methodology is as follows:

1. Documentary research was applied at the first step. Various books and documents were studied: Bible and Tripitaka scriptures, commentaries, a sub-commentary, a sub-subcommentary, and related books and documents. The concepts of socially engaged Buddhism in Thailand and ASEAN community found in these readings were analyzed to be used as a guideline for the field study.

2. Field research (or fieldwork) was done through interview and observation. For data collection, in-depth interviews, focus group, interviewing through telephone and participation observe and non-participation observe were conducted.

Population and Sample

The population and sample were selected by purposive sampling with the selection criterion as they live in Buddhist communities in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. They were selected for the following reasons.

1. They use Buddhist wisdoms in many dimensions of life, as a target of life and Buddhist lifestyle.

2. They are large Buddhist communities with the extensive network containing people in many different groups, different duties and different status: They clearly show the forms of relationship in management and in movement processes sustaining and strengthening the communities themselves to stand the globalization.

3. They are strong communities with concepts and strategies to develop the lives of the people at the grassroots level, who were the majority of their country.

4. They are the members of Buddhist communities in which the people paid less attention to the religious cult. Although the rituals practiced are based on the doctrine of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, the real tar-

get of practice is to develop communities and societies.

5. They are the communities located in various conditions of the environment; therefore, they could illustrate how the Buddhist philosophy is applied in different social conditions.

In this research, the tools used in data collection are categorized into 6 parts as follows:

Part 1: questions related to the background and development of the community

Part 2: questions related to the history of bureau /organization development

Part 3: questions related to each organization's concept of worldly philosophy, philosophy of life, life target, philosophy of living and values and practices

Part 4: questions related to rituals and practices of each organization

Part 5: questions related to methods, contents and processes of dharma teaching

Part 6: questions related to social development strategies in various dimensions: spiritual, intellectual, educational, economic, environmental and natural resource, research and technological dimensions.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "healthy" as being happy physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. For Buddhist belief the healthiest condition is in Nirvana only. Only those who achieve Nirvana can be truly disease free. All kinds of suffering a human has to face are diseases; aging is considered a latent disease in every human who thinks she/he is healthy therefore, it is concluded that disease is in every human being. Buddhism looks at illness in many dimensions; it may be a threat to life, a common phenomenon in life, or a useful incident pointing out the fragility of life and reminding one to live a careful life. Take a knee pain as an example; it can teach a person that stability is not a state that his/her body can hold on forever. It can get pain and get change; there is nothing his/hers; even himself/herself does not exist. This, mover, does not intend to tell him/her to give up to the pain, believing at it has been causal by pre-existing cause (as in 'Subbe Sankhara anicca-ti); healing must be sought. But in some cases it may be incurable; for these cases, one has to accept that there are some his/her factors that she/he cannot handle.

Time is another important thing, especially time in one's dead need. In Buddhism aspect, at the time of one's dying, it is very important and the base value because throughout life, we have never seen a crisis like this. If we go to a new excuse that long, therefore, to take advantage of every moment of life in there is development.

Buddhism is an intellectual and moral foundation that is important for health professionals as both humans and professionals. Buddhist wisdom for health care is "a light in darkness" in the health care system in Thailand and ASEAN Community. The inter identity wisdom helps to form a good

health care system; the system created by humane mind servants. It is a patient-centered system; gives the patients the services they need. The health professionals use the Four of Brahma's Dharma as guiding principles to not only cure the patients but also develop their human potential. These professionals are friendly and gentle to life and nature. They have ability to see a human as the holistic; to see authentic suffering knowingly, and to give a qualified health care by trying to access the highest goal that is truth, goodness and beauty experienced in each period of life. They can use all these abilities to health develop a patient's potential of life while curing their illness. They can do this successfully by guiding the patient to either live with the past, using the good past as inspiration to fight for life; follow the past, using the past as lessons to teach how to live happily; go ahead of the past, forgetting the bad things in the past; or using the true of life. It is quite a wonderful health care service, to turn the illness, a crisis of life, into a great opportunity to develop potential of life.

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