

# Application Model for Buddhist Economics in Community of Thailand

<sup>[1]</sup> Phrapalad Raphin Buddhisar (Duangloi), <sup>[2]</sup> Phatarapol Jai Yen,  
<sup>[3]</sup> Phichet Thangto, <sup>[4]</sup> Phramaha Nigorn Thanuttaro,

<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup> <sup>[4]</sup> Faculty of Social Sciences, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,

<sup>[1]</sup>raphind@yahoo.com, <sup>[2]</sup>phatraphol1@hotmail.com, <sup>[3]</sup>ptoto@mcu.ac.th, <sup>[4]</sup>nigornpc@hotmail.com

*Abstract— The purposes of this research were to study and to propose guidelines and forms application of Buddhist economics in the model community in Thai society. Qualitative research was used for research design. Research results revealed that 1) Thai society has Buddhism as the foundation. Buddhism concepts were applied for interpreting and giving an explanation together with economic behavior. It is a mechanism in conjunction with the community way of life as shown in the sufficiency economy in community such as saving property (Sajjasomsob Group) that was the sufficiency way in the community. There are monks who are leading the concept to the public such as Buddhadasa bhikkhu, P.A. Payutto, Santiasok Group, etc. 2) Application of Buddhist Economics in the model community in Thai society of Ban Phai Nge community, and Wang Nam Yen Community, Suphan Buri Province (Northern region), Ban Mae Kwak Community, Village No. 1, Ban On Subdistrict, Lampang Province. Application of Buddhist economics management within the community was the concept of "Fit, Sufficiency, Balance, Wisdom, Unity, and Happiness" until receiving the award "Yu Dee Mee Suk-Live for Happiness" at the provincial level that received the royal award from HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Emphasizing on self-reliance (Atta-nat) and promoting the production of products were used within the community, and service delivery (Fellowship) included groups to supplement their occupations after farming. The model was applied with the principles of Buddhism through the way of religious beliefs and the way of life. Monks were the community leaders and led people to do the activities with the temple that was important support and management combined with the culture in the community as well.*

Index Terms— *Application Model, Buddhist Economics, Community of Thailand*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The era of information change through technology resulting in immediate learning the hectic lifestyle has become an important factor in the fast changing era. Consumption values have become an important factor affecting economic growth which is in the form of higher Gross National Product, and more investment higher living standards in the life-enhancing factors by understanding that what is consumed that important in life. The materialistic world and consumerism are weighted beyond fit and reality more than fit with income and occupation. In Buddhism, it is called "passion" which becomes a guiding factor until violating social ethics standards diminished ethics and illegal exploitation both being passed on to consumers who lack consciousness in consumption irresponsible consumption and not aware of the acquisition. The result then becomes the decline of human morality and the peace of the society [1]. Money becomes the main factor and is therefore the most important thing in human life. The pursuit of income does not correspond to expenses with the belief that the pursuit will make people happy which corresponds to the principle "Happiness of the householder or Kihisuk (Pali Words) or Kamaphokeesuk (the happiness from lustfulness)". According to Buddhism, it is something that should promote "self-sufficiency" in which humans seek happiness from possessions, knowing their efforts, diligence and rightfully until the result is "Phoksuk", which is the happiness from obtaining and spending with happiness in the property obtained and perform in which the practice should be like that humans seek correctly. They spend happily, but in the fact it turns out that more income. However, a part of humans in this society are happy and worsening, less quality of life for reasons of "imbalance" in both income and expenditure, everyone wants the highest

Nevertheless, satisfaction in consuming goods and services is endless, difficult to control, want to have, want to be, and want to eat. When demand is too much to be achieved, it causes mental value deterioration which also affects the allocation of religious materials and other social structures as well [2].

Therefore, Thailand has been affected by economic, political, and cultural fluctuations at both the national and international levels. Income instability and the problem of economic, social and cultural inequality has become one of the problems in Thailand. The current development path does not benefit everyone equality in rights that should not be equal. It increased benefits but belonging to the same capital group or interest group, such as work in the production sector for export whereas people still rely on the domestic economy, such as small-scale farmers. This group tends to receive less benefit when compared to proportions. Poverty is a problem that reflects inequality and social gap which is still common in the countryside especially in the agricultural society of Thailand

The modern world with the Western world drive the development through materialism and consumerism by using greed as a stimulus, with the phrase "Greed in Good" or "greed is good" because the desire to stimulate development thinking about researching to create wealth and to make the world prosper. This prosperity is the ability to produce various objects and technology, but at the same time greed leads to exploitation and violent conflict and destroying the environment as various wars, including the Second World War in the last century [3] development based on the western style of consumerism driven by greed and leading to severe balancing in every way including life, economy, society and environment. Capitalism is a social system that adheres to the principles of individual rights including rights or ownership of property (Property Rights),

and a system in which all possessions are personally owned [4]. Everyone has a life or desire to live for themselves. This fact does not interfere with social life, but supporting social life because to make the life of the individual more complete, it is possible to rely on society. This is the true meaning of the teaching that "Selfish" (Egoism) is a fundamental rule of society [5]. They know how help, share and support each other in society including consumption, production for sustainable development. It is taking into account the effects that will occur in the society. It is a Buddhist economic action based on the balance of all things [6], making the poor happier (or suffering and difficulty decreasing) until the income has reached a certain level. Money may have little or no effect on happiness [6]. Man is the person who creates suffering and when humans are the cause of suffering because of not trying to understand everything in the natural truth, humans are able to free themselves from suffering and go back to understand the true nature of all things [7].

The subsistence agriculture cannot meet the demand under the trend of values and consumerism. Consumption exceeds income migration from rural areas to industrial societies. The traditional way of agriculture has been neglected, and the concept of "balance" under the concept of sufficiency economy has therefore been applied under the Thai society into an agricultural society by His Majesty the King Rama 9 (1927-2016) which corresponds to the majority of the population under the agricultural method. To promote Thai society, the Thai population is equal under the production factors that have "food" as an important factor, as the saying that "Money is the fake, Fish and rice is real" [8]. Equality is real whereas inequality is also an important and worrisome aspect of Thailand's development situation. While Thailand has achieved great macroeconomic and MDG overall criteria, some marginalized societies are still abandoned or in worrisome conditions. The issue of income inequality social protection and access to public services is a major concern about human development.

As Thailand is a country in which most citizens believe in Buddhism and have been under the culture of the Buddhist thought system for a long time, Buddhism principles are promoted under the concept of Sufficiency Economy [9]. Even as a model for Thailand as shown to the public [10], including the promotion of understanding of the criteria of sufficiency economy for the benefit of community management in accordance with the Buddhist way and promote the process of driving. Therefore, under the concept of community ways with temples and Buddhism is the foundation of the Thai society including temples and monks situated in that community. Buddhist doctrine is the base of society that was applied to the principles of the sufficiency economy concept "well-being and happiness" as if it were central principles of society in promoting or encouraging community mobilization at the national level which results in a social-economic evolution from the community level to the national level. Therefore, the results of this study will study the ways and forms of Buddhist economy. Methods and guidelines for application are proposing the application of Buddhist economics in the model community in Thailand to be a guideline and applied for further development of other communities in Thailand.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research article were 1) to study the ways and forms of Buddhist economics in Thailand, 2) to

study the methods and approaches in applying the Buddhist economics in the model community in Thailand, and 3) to propose the models of the application of Buddhist economics in Sample community in Thailand.

## III. RESEARCH METHODS

Conducting research on "Application model for Buddhist Economics in the prototype community in Thailand, Application Model for Buddhist Economics in Sampling Community of Thailand" used documentary research by collecting data from books, textbooks, research reports, academic articles, journals, and other documents. The variables of the study was showing relationships in relation to economic concepts in Buddhist scriptures, principles, methods, and components in Buddhist economics and Buddhist principles that promote the principles of economics including field study, in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

### A. Research tools

The tools used for collecting data were the questions in the interview. There were related issues which consisted of 1) application of Buddhist principles for community management, 2) guidelines and forms of Buddhist economics in Thailand, 3) guidelines for applying Buddhist economics in communities, and 4) tools used for data collection are field record form and observation form for the application of Buddhist Economics in the sample community in Thailand.

### B. Data collection

The information obtained from document research was analyzed for interviews, participatory observation and group conversation brought to explain the facts to answer the content according to the set objectives. After that, the data obtained from the analysis was compiled into a descriptive presentation according to the content structure, assemble the photos and describe the composition. In applying the principles of Buddhist economics in Thailand through the concepts of economic practices in Buddhism, it included the Buddhist principles that promote the principles of economics and brought all the data to conclude the research in accordance with the objectives of the research. Discuss the findings based on facts and suggestions for research were provided by publishing in book form and research reports.

### C. Research framework

From the research studied of "The Application Model of Buddhist Economics in the Model Community in Thailand", the researcher has studied and designed the concept theory and research related through the conceptual framework as follows:

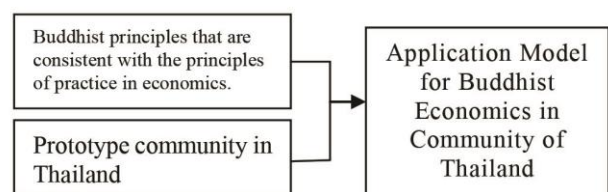


Fig. 1 Research Framework

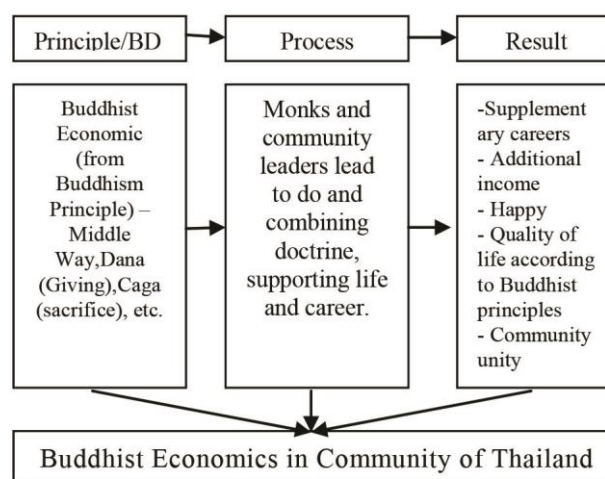
#### IV. RESULTS

Results of this research were shown as follows:

1. For methods and forms of Buddhist economics in Thailand, there are monks who are leading the concept to the public such as Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Phra Phromkhunaphon (P.A. Payutto), Santi Asoke, etc. It found that there were self-reliant communities in accordance with Buddhist principles that emphasizes sufficiency living spread throughout the country. By having the form in (1) the monk to be the leading role model carry out self-sufficiency in accordance with Buddhist principles such as Santi Asoka and the network. Driving communities through self-reliant agriculture was led by the leadership of Phra Payom monk, at Suan Kaew Temple that used agriculture as a guide to help people. (2) Integration of Buddhism and living through small financial institutions Satchasombat Property Group Phra Ajahn Subin Pitoito of Wat Pai Lom, Trat Province, Phra Ajahn Manatphanatthamo of Wat Pho Thong, Chanthaburi Province etc. (3) Promoting and encouraging by monks were shown by community leaders and the state as shown in the community such as Wat Saphan Community, Mueang District, Chai Nat Province, Ban Phut Phra community, Village No. 4, Nong Bua Subdistrict, Mueang Kancharaburi District Kancharaburi Bang Yai Subdistrict Community Economic Community, Bang Yai District, Nonthaburi Province. These communities have adopted Buddhist economics guidelines by leading monks' clergyman or community leaders. There were ways to manage using social capital in regard to the generosity shared as a drive respect for adults, and helping each other, adopting social institutions which mean family, religion and culture. They have spent time to work in the community by using patience, determination, and diligence. Therefore, successful all of the concepts of the Buddhist doctrine have become a mechanism for seeking knowledge (wisdom). There were training to bring people who were knowledgeable in community agriculture, became an assistant or providing knowledge about production that can produce products and promote good quality of life to be perfect and suitable way to live together.

2. Application of Buddhist Economics in a sample community in Thailand in the two groups that have been carried out successfully, consisting of Ban Phai Nge Village, Village No. 1, Wang Nam Yen Subdistrict, and Phai Lom Community M.1, Pho Lom Subdistrict, Bang Pla Ma District, Changwat Suphanburi (northern region), Mae Khek Village, Village No. 1, Ban-On Sub-district, Ngao District, Lampang Province, by being a representative of the samples that successfully applied the principles of Buddhism to Buddhist Economics in community management. The concept of unity helps each other (alms-chakra) by applying the principles of problems (suffering) to intelligence (wisdom) to find a solution to the production together as a 4 factor to a lifestyle that has just enough goals and balance (Middle Way), with the base of the temple, religion, community, community leaders who join together to supplement their occupation after farming such as raising livestock, chickens, cows, goats and fish in terms of increasing other agricultural products. They also conducted growing vegetables, kitchen gardens, the marigold planting group that setting up agricultural product processing groups, such as banana slices, fried bananas in Lampang, fish

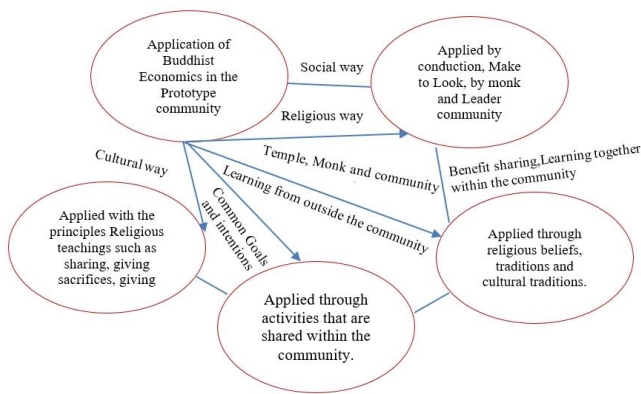
farming and fish production such as dried fish, fish sauce in Suphan Buri Province. Application under local wisdom, religious methods, beliefs and Buddhist principles were a Buddhist economy under the concept of sufficiency balance, applying the problems to intelligence in production and consumption, unity in coexistence to improve the quality of life and live a participatory life until receiving the "Yu Dee Mee Suk" Village Award at the provincial level and received the royal award from HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Siam Sufficiency economy. Process of Buddhist Economic in Community in Thailand can be shown as below figure.



**Fig.2** Process of Buddhist Economic in Community Thailand

From Fig.2, it can be explained that the introduction of Buddhist doctrine such as the middle way (Matchimapatipada) principles of fellowship sacrifice principles (Cāga), principles of sharing (alms), the Buddhist teachings to integrate with community activities, with monks and community leaders leading the way to promote activities. The result of following the Buddhist economy make people more professional and have more income better quality of life and happy as appropriately according to Buddhism.

3. Learning model of application of Buddhist economics in a sample community in Thailand by all forms that appear in the community Beginning with (1) setting goals in accordance with Buddhist science regarding balance and happiness which is the goal of the human being as a whole, (2) learning to practice the Buddhist economy on the integration of old knowledge and applying it to the conditions of traditional community economics, (3) adaptation under Buddhist economics is an adjustment under a new situation, new learning and new experiences under traditional production and production for consumption towards production quality and quality of life. (4) Buddhist Economics Management is a holistic management system which every process of the form can be mixed and applied with principles that leading to make it as a model through religious and social beliefs. Therefore, community activities have a way of religion as a determinant and applied under the religious path.



**Fig. 3** A Model of Knowledge of Buddhist Economics in Community of Thailand

From Fig. 3, it can be explained that the introduction of Buddhist doctrine such as the middle way (Pali: *Matchimapatipada*), Buddhist harmonious (Pali: *Samakkii Dhamma*), Sacrifice principle (Pali: *Cāga*), Principle of sharing (Pali: *Dana*), Buddhist teachings to integrate with community activities. Monks and community leaders can lead the way to promote activities and result of following the Buddhist economy are made people having more professional and income to gain better quality of life and happy as appropriately that according to Buddhist way.

## V. DISCUSSIONS

1. Methods and forms of Buddhist economics in Thailand from a survey of research studies on sample communities in Thailand about community management and the guidelines and models of Buddhist economics in Thailand will find that community management occurs under the concept of sufficiency economy of Buddhist economics that comes from the Buddhist principle that balance is sufficient (meditative) to ponder and then practice (Pali: *Aparihaniyadham*), unity, wisdom, to the practice of Buddhist economics. Guidelines for practice is led by monks, priests and community leaders which is sacrificed for the community as a whole in the management of the community with the application of the doctrine in Buddhism according to the Buddhist economy. As a principle of operation as shown and consistent with Jaron Rattanakan's research (2013) [11] on "Applying Buddhist principles and sufficiency economy concepts for the coexistence of people in Sam Bundit Subdistrict, Uthai District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province" and Yuthapong Saengsoda (2001) [12] on "The Role of Monks and the Problem Solving of Thai Society A Case Study of Sajja Sasom Sub Group (saving money group), Chanthaburi Province, "Research of Phrakhu Phisan Thamrakkit (2011) [13] on the Application of Buddhist Principles in Self-Reliance: A Case Study of Ban Mae Sai Satcha Savings Group." Research of Choa Athikarn Charoen Kittikuno (2010) [14], or Luang Phi Chang of Phrom Phiram, on research of management of Buddhist faithful group under the sufficiency economy principles Krap Phuang Nuea temple Phrom Phiram district, Phitsanulok Province. It was also related to the research of Phra Thananan Thanututaro (Chaichat) (2016) [15] on the management according to the philosophy of sufficiency economy, secondary school under the Kalasin Provincial Administrative Organization, etc.

2. For methods and guidelines for applying Buddhist economics to the model community in Thailand, the sample used in the study received an outstanding village award at the provincial level consisting of (Central) Ban Phai Nge Community, Village No. 1, Wang Nam Yen Subdistrict, Bang Pla Ma District, Suphan Buri Province (Northern region), Mae Khok Village, Village No. 1, Ban On Sub-district, Ngao District, Lampang Province by using the concept of sufficiency Balance (middle), knowledge seeking (wisdom) to add value progress in profit and community products and application under the concept of balance and mutual assistance. Results are consistent with the study of Kingkaew Buapetch (2009) [16] in the research on "Participation in ecotourism management by communities: a case study of Kiriwong Community, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province The results of Aphinan Yodmanee (2003) [17] on "Self-Reliance of Mai Rieng Community, Chawang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province", including Phra Kru Phiphat Kittisunthorn Nooduk (2017) [18] on "Application of Buddhist Philosophy and Philosophy of the sufficiency economy for strengthening the community strength in Na Thawi District Songkhla province. "Research of Soavanath Leklersin (2017: 88-98) [19] on "Knowledge, Understanding and Application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Community Economic Development, Bang Yai Subdistrict, Bang Yai District, Nonthaburi Province" that conducted by Pattama Gomenjumrus (2016) [20]. Regarding the relationship between the level of knowledge of the sufficiency economy concept and the level of practice regarding the sufficiency economy concept of Song Khlong community, Bang Pakong district, Chachoengsao province Roi Kwan Buddhamongmee's Research (2013) [21] on the knowledge and local wisdom of Ban Don Mu community, Ban Tum Yea Community, Ratchathani Asoke Community and the community practicing sufficiency economy Ubon Ratchathani Province, etc.

3. Application of Buddhist economics in the sample community in Thailand is applied by the applied principles through religious beliefs and the way of life that applied by taking through activities with monks. Community leaders drive under the religious way of the temple, the monks and cultural integration within the community as to (1) the application of principles to the sufficiency of the balance under the religious way, (2) the application to encourage create learning, share (eat-cāga), knowledge to follow as learning under the path of wisdom to management within the community, (3) promote knowledge transfer within the community and society, (4) create a process and aiding and continuing systematic learning for the benefit of holistic learning and propagation. This will lead to systematic driving which is consistent with the research by Thanawut Pimki and Chantana Ritsomboon (2014) [22] on the application of the sufficiency economy initiative to community enterprises in Chanthaburi Province, research of Usanee Suwan (2015) [23] on "The role of women in community development in accordance with the philosophy of the sufficiency economy in Wat Saphan Community, Muang District, Chai Nat Province. "Research of Sukanda Klinkhachorn and Khwan Kamondonkwa (2017) [24] on the operational efficiency of cassava industry by applying use the philosophy of the sufficiency economy in the northeast region, Research of Sompis Poonjaturus and Others (2018) [25] on "Self-learning set based on the

philosophy of sufficiency economy to the implementation of the Ban Saokradong community, Ayutthaya Province, in the work of Navarat Boonpila (2017) [26] on the conduction of the sufficiency economy philosophy and community economic development: the case of Ban Thon Na Lap Village No. 1, Thon Na Lap Subdistrict, Ban Dung District, Udon Thani Province And the research of Samran Chuachuay (2014) [27] on the way of life of people in the riverside of Bangkok Noi canal community, Nonthaburi province, in line with the philosophy of the sufficiency economy, etc.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Recommendations for Practices

Driving the application of Buddhist economics in Thailand into action for the Buddhist community is considered as important and necessary which will cause the movement to the area and practice as a whole:

(1) Drive as a policy to local administrative organizations to apply the concepts of Buddhist economics in various communities to act as reality with religious, cultural, and traditional means as a base for expanding activities to a wider community.

(2) Monks and Buddhists have to work more invent and interpret the teachings of Buddhism in accordance with the concept of economics. Buddhist economics will make teachings valuable to practice that resulting in quality of life for those who follow. Virtue in living combined with Buddhist economics without taking advantage creative not causing damage to the society.

(3) Community should be encouraged as a prototype community that has guidelines for good practice in other model communities, and then bring those results to propagation in various communities to cover nationwide.

### B. Recommendations for Further Research

(1) Further research should include the application of Buddhist principles that will use in community management in order to create a mechanism for practice in the national level.

(2) Mixed methods research should be applied for the next research in order to study and research the achievement of the implementation of Buddhist agricultural practices in Thai communities throughout the country.

## CONCLUSION

Application of Buddhist Economics in Thailand is the integration of Buddhist doctrine into the mechanism of practice. Communities have an agricultural way of life with monks and community leaders using temples as the base for their operations Integration with religion, traditions, beliefs, careers, and lifestyle. Resulting in happiness and the quality of life of people in the community with the goal of improving the quality of life of community members are expected. The guidelines are (1) implemented by the monks and community leaders, (2 ) learning, alertness and compliance, (3) promoting the driving to various processes that can occur, (4 ) resulting in an additional income, (5 ) improved quality of life, and (6 ) sufficiency in the community in the form of Buddhist economics.

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