

Integrating the Buddhist Dhamma Essence through Community Funerals, Nong Lak Subdistrict, Chaiwan District, Udon Thani Province

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Abstract - The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the funeral rites in Theravada Buddhist scriptures; 2) to study the funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district, Chaiwan District, Udon Thani Province; 3) to study the integration of the Buddhist Dhamma through the funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district. This is a qualitative study based on the obtained data from documents and key informants, presented by Descriptive Analysis. The research results were as follows: Funeral rites in Theravada Buddhist scriptures: Buddhism views death as a normal part of life. The funeral ceremony in the Buddhist scriptures along with the method of dealing with the corpse is done in a simple way by taking the body for cremation, burying, and discarding it as food for animals or even taking the corpse as a tool for practice to attain the path of fruition. Funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district: there is a treatment of the dying patient until the treatment of ashes for merit dedication. At present, it has changed from the original but still holding on to tradition and practices that have been inherited from the past. Integration of the Buddhist Dhamma through the funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district: in order to see the Buddhist Dhamma that reflects the value of life, the following Dhammas must be used: 1) mindfulness on death integrated with treatment of the dying patient; 2) Tilakkhaṇa integrated with the treatment of the corpse; 3) Puññakiriya-Vatthu integrated with funeral chanting and merit-making practices; 4) gratitude integrated with funeral ordination; 5) truthfulness integrated with cremation practice.

Keywords— Integrating, Buddhist Dhamma Essence, Funerals

I. INTRODUCTION

All human beings must die in front of them. Because life has impermanence, it arises, exists, decays, and falls. When we talk about death, it is known to be something that no one desires. Because death is a story that brings about the sorrow that arises from separation. All humans

or animals are those who do not want to die or do not want to face death. Buddhism is regarded as the religion of truth which speaks of the truth in accordance with the laws of nature. The truth is the laws of cause and effect such as specific conditionality, it talks about the cause and effect of all things that when this thing exists, that comes to be, with the arising of this, that arises.[1] It means that the things in the world cannot exist alone because the things in the world are constantly dependent on other things for their existence. Therefore, the emergence of all things is a result of the merger of two or more things. This law is regarded as the law of nature that the Buddha discovers and disseminates to all beings in the form of various rules such as Paticca-samuppada (the dependent origination [2]

In addition to that, there is the three characteristics law that explains specific conditionality in terms of the process of being. In terms of being natural, things have to go in three ways 1. impermanence 2. suffering 3. non-self [3] These laws refer to the state of things that must conform to the laws of nature which is the universal law that all things must arise, exist and fall. It is common in the process of human life and all animals. Buddhism sees that there are reasons that must comply with the rules, that is to say, there is a birth, there is death because it belongs to each other. Buddhism sees that when humans are initially born, they must eventually die. As the Buddha said “This body has grown old, it is a nest of disease, it gradually deteriorates. This rotten body will be destroyed because life is the end of death[4] It can be seen that the truth in human beings must face, that is “death”, the word death corresponds to the Pali “cutti” (moving) cavanata, maranam (death) sankhaaranam bhedo (the death of formation kalevassa nikkhepo (abandonment of corpses). What is mentioned above, can be summarized that the end of life. When a death occurs, humans have to process corpses of different characteristics in practice to the afterlife or the corpses of a relative or a benefactor and whoever according to the Thai way of life based on religious morality. This is because most of the Thai ancestors believe in Buddhism according to their way of life from birth until death. It is therefore closely hidden by the principles of Buddhist Dhamma. In the afterlife, it can be seen that religious morality will be very important to the person behind the scenes. For this reason, all the ceremonies organized with the death have a purpose and are hidden in the Dhamma puzzle or Buddhist doctrine in the process of the ritual is somewhat complicated which is difficult to understand and different from birth.

In the Buddhist era, it can be seen that when death occurs, there are many ways how to manage the corpses such as bringing the corpses to the cemetery as the Buddha said “Animals are often born and die, and people often take the corpses to the cemetery”[5] “Bhikkhu sees the corpse that is left in the cemetery, one day dead, two days dead, or three days dead, a bloated corpse, a dark green corpse, a greasy corpse[6] To uplift the funeral pyre in order to be incinerated in this case is often found such as the case of the management of the Buddha’s body or the story of Pathacara who cremates her parents and his brother in the heavy rain, the wind causes the house to collapse[7] Burial in the cemetery, in this case, is the case of

Visakha who buries the body (corpse) of the Kumarika at that time[8] And the corpses are floated to the Ganga River regardless of the managing funerals, there are ceremonies associated with the belief in managing funerals such as a rich man who buries his son and orders people to deliver rice and water regularly is one of the funeral traditions. There is a simple and dignified ceremony, especially in the management of the cremation of the Lord Buddha's body. The funeral ceremony undertaking during the Buddha's time emphasizes convenience, and quickness because it is seen that the corpse of a human being is like a piece of wood without a soul[9] It can be seen in the process regarding managing corpses, it's a simple practice. It can be seen from the abandoned corpses that are fed for animals.

In the present day, society has developed in accordance with the values of the people, and in the process of funeral ceremony undertaking have been added many things. These may be social conditions or the era until it becomes something extravagant than necessary. As seen today, when death occurs, we need to buy the coffin, chanting, flowers decoration, wreaths, food, and drink are served for those attending the funeral ceremony. After that, it is the cremation ceremony. All of these managements are related to the cost of death which has become a business with a minimum income of one hundred million baht or more per year.

In Nonglak sub-district community, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province is considered an area where the majority of the population believes in Buddhism and has a multicultural population. But diversity is based on their beliefs about Buddhism such as birth and death traditions that are followed within the Buddhist belief framework. Only the tradition of death in Nonglak sub-district community has followed the beliefs of each tribal. In particular, the funeral ceremony undertaking tradition of Nonglak sub-district community has a unique process for treating the dead, that is, monks are invited to pray for the patient's renewal or even after death, there will be a process of tying (mud tra sang), etc., The process of tradition mentioned above, the researcher sees that there is Buddhist doctrine or Dhamma puzzle hidden such as we convince those who are alive to understand the principles of life, namely, the impermanence is suffering and the formation of the body according to the principle of Buddha teaching.

Therefore, from the background and significance mentioned above, the researcher is interested in the study of funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district community in the title " The integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province", how the funeral ceremony undertaking of each process of the Buddha's core teachings is. It will be the greatest benefit of the general public who attend the ceremony to receive it. It can also be applied to living in a true way of life according to the principles of Buddhism, and for further education and social development.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the funeral rites in Theravada Buddhist scriptures.
2. To study the funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district, Chaiwan District, Udon Thani Province.
3. To study the integration of the Buddhist Dhamma through the funeral rites of the community in Nong Lak Sub-district.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was qualitative research. It was determined as follows;

1. The data were collected from document research. The documentary study was collected by the primary source and secondary source concerning Tipitaka, textbooks, thesis, dissertation, research report, document as well as academic data concerning the integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province.
2. Fieldwork was collected from virtual places as follows; 12 villages of families in Nonglak sub-district community consisting of Moo. 1 Baan Nonglak, Moo. 2 Baan Nongkaen, Moo. 3 Baan Sa-nguay, Moo. 4 Baan Napoo, Moo. 5 Baan Hua Nongyang, Moo.6 Baan Nong E-Au, Moo. 7 Baan Sa-nguay, Moo. 8 Baan Nonsawang, Moo. 9 Baan Nakang, Moo. 10 Baan Nongdaeng Chaimongkol, Moo. 11 Baan Sa-nguay, Moo. 12 Baan Nonglak. The key informants were collected by interview and analyzed by the descriptive explanation according to the inductive method.
3. The data were collected from the primary source and secondary source and fieldwork.
4. The data were presented from the analysis of the descriptive explanation.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

There were three objectives as follows; 1. to study the funeral ceremony in Theravada Buddhism 2. to study the funeral ceremony in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province 3. to study the integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province. The data were collected by in-depth interviews. There were 40 informants. Descriptive analysis was used in this research. The findings were found that.

The funeral ceremony undertaking in Theravada Buddhism: Theravada Buddhism viewed that death was a normal thing of life that arose, existed, and fell. In the funeral ceremony undertaking in Theravada Buddhism, there were simple methods of dealing with corpses by

cremating or burying. And the corpses were abandoned to feed the animals and were used as a component in the practice for the noble eightfold path.

The funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province: It would treat for patients who were dying, dead bodies, cremation, and there was a practice of collecting ashes to make merit for the dead. In practice depended on the characteristics of the village. Nowadays, Nonglak sub-district community has changed from the original by managing normal death and abnormal death. But the various ceremonial steps are still being held according to tradition and practice that has been made to inherit from each other.

The integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province: It was found that funeral ceremony undertaking tradition showed that the Buddha's core teachings reflecting the value of life, truthfulness as follows;

1. Mindfulness of death integrated the practices when the patient was dying.
2. The three characteristics integrated the corpse's tradition.
3. Bases of meritorious action integrated the funeral prayer traditions.
4. Gratefulness integrated the ordination before the funeral pyre and moving and leading the corpses.
5. Truthfulness integrated cremation tradition.

V. DISCUSSIONS

1. The funeral ceremony undertaking in Theravada Buddhism: It was organized in the Buddha era in Theravada Buddhism and other scriptures. In the Buddhist era was found that there was no complexity of the funeral ceremony undertaking like nowadays. It was just a simple ritual dealing with corpses managing during the Buddhist era. Actually, only the corpse was thrown away, it was almost impossible to find other things. It was called the teaching to consider corpses at different and it was left the corpses in the cemetery. However, the funeral ceremony undertaking in the Buddhist era pointed to the Buddha teaching of sin, the three characteristics, defunct kamma, heedfulness, and gratitude to remind us of the way of life. It was in accordance with Theerapong Meethaisong, et al. [10] in the title "The adjustment of Buddhist rituals for proper practice: A case study on the funeral ceremony undertaking in Baan Tha Khonyang community, Tha Khonyang sub-district, Kantharawichai district, Mahasarakham province" was found that each region had a different ritual practice due to respect and beliefs. This has been passed down from generation to generation. Currently, this

tradition has been established since ancient times. In ancient times, funeral managing was simple, there weren't many ceremonies. But nowadays, it has changed and complicated from the original and more rituals. But there are also rituals that are still hidden with Dhamma puzzle that has been inserted, and each locality has different funeral managing according to the host's values and the position of the host.

2. The funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province: It was considered an honor and mourned for the dead in the last days. And it expressed the gratitude of the children and relatives of the dead to remember the merits of those who passed away. The funeral was still hidden with the Buddha's core teachings that the sages created by bringing the Dhamma of the Buddha to be hidden in order to practice of next-generation and gave ideas on how to live a heedfulness by teaching through funerals. It is in accordance with Somphan Phromtha [11] in the title "viewpoints of Buddhism on birth and death" was found that death was a phenomenon known as death. If we considered from the framework of common sense at the end of life. A person who saw death to be known that when a human or animal died, the body that used to be able to function completely stopped existing. Then the body would decay, namely the four elements – earth, water, fire, and wind. When it stopped, it was death.

3. Model of integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province: It gave a morality that was inserted into the ritual. It evoked the concept of the motto and the correct practices according to the moral and ethical principles that were consistent with the way of life in terms of the truth. There were the Buddha's core teachings that existed in the funeral ceremony undertaking as follows;

1. The Buddha's core teachings from the practice when the patient was dead, that was mindfulness of death. It was a remembrance of death. It was the development of one's mind to know the world as it really was. It prepared one's mind for death when it came. This was to make the patient conscious and not fall into death.

2. The Buddha's core teachings from the corpse's tradition, that was the three characteristics: It was unpredictable in life.

3. The Buddha's core teachings from the funeral prayer traditions, that was bases of meritorious action. It was a morality of heedfulness, it was a reminder to encourage the mind to strive for merit whether giving, precepts or mental development as well as it was seen the real law of life, namely impermanence, state of suffering, soullessness.

4. The Buddha's core teachings from the ordination before the funeral pyre and moving and leading the corpses, that was gratefulness. It was a Buddha doctrine belief in reincarnation in

the next world. The Buddhist doctrine of gratefulness repaid the grace of parents as the Lord Buddha preached the basket of sublime to parents in the Tavatimsa Realm.

5. The Buddha's core teachings from cremation tradition, that was truthfulness. The way of life would happen to everyone whether sooner or later. The truthfulness of living was that which came from death.

It was the truthfulness of life. It is in accordance with Charuwan Dhammawat [12] mentioned that Isaan people have religious belief activities and according to the values of the community through the year which Issan language is called Heat Khong or Heat Baan Khong Mueng. It is divided into 2 parts; 1. It is a personal tradition that is popularly practiced during important stages of life such as birth, ordination, dressing, and death 2. It is a collective tradition which are activities that are done together with the whole community such as building a temple, building a church or building a good pattern as a common norm. Besides, some traditions are traditions for Buddhism.

VI. BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The research of "The integration of the Buddha's core teachings through funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district, Chaiwan district, Udonthani province" obtains the body of new knowledge as follows;

1. Mind: it was a value that affects oneself. The funeral ceremony undertaking of Nonglak sub-district community created a psychological response both in terms of family members as an expression of gratitude and showing compassion for each other, and this opportunity helped to make merit as charity to the dead people it would bring happiness, satisfaction, and accumulating merit for oneself. Moreover, they could listen to the principles of Buddhism inserted in the ritual as well.

2. Harmony of community: The funeral ceremony undertaking of Nonglak sub-district community was based on beliefs in the principle of Buddhism which appeared in the funeral ceremony undertaking such as funeral chanting, funeral make-up, etc., it could be considered as a good activity impacting on society in the community. It was to create solidarity with the community. Whenever there were people in the village who died, the villagers would come to help each other. It was considered to show compassion for the dead and the host.

3. Traditional and cultural inheritance: Buddhism inheritance, arts and culture was a key to improving the quality of people in society and enable to bring the principle of Buddhism to be corrected and improving people's quality of life. If we adhered to the religion and conduct according to the principle of teaching correctly. People would have qualities and virtues, discipline responsible, responsibility, diligence, patient, able to develop the country to be stable.

It can be seen that the funeral ceremony undertaking in Nonglak sub-district community is a ceremony that is hidden with Buddhist doctrine, it is a Dhamma puzzle that the ancient Isaan people believe to be reminded for those attending the funeral to gain ideas on how to live in the future in order to do good thing, live with carelessness.

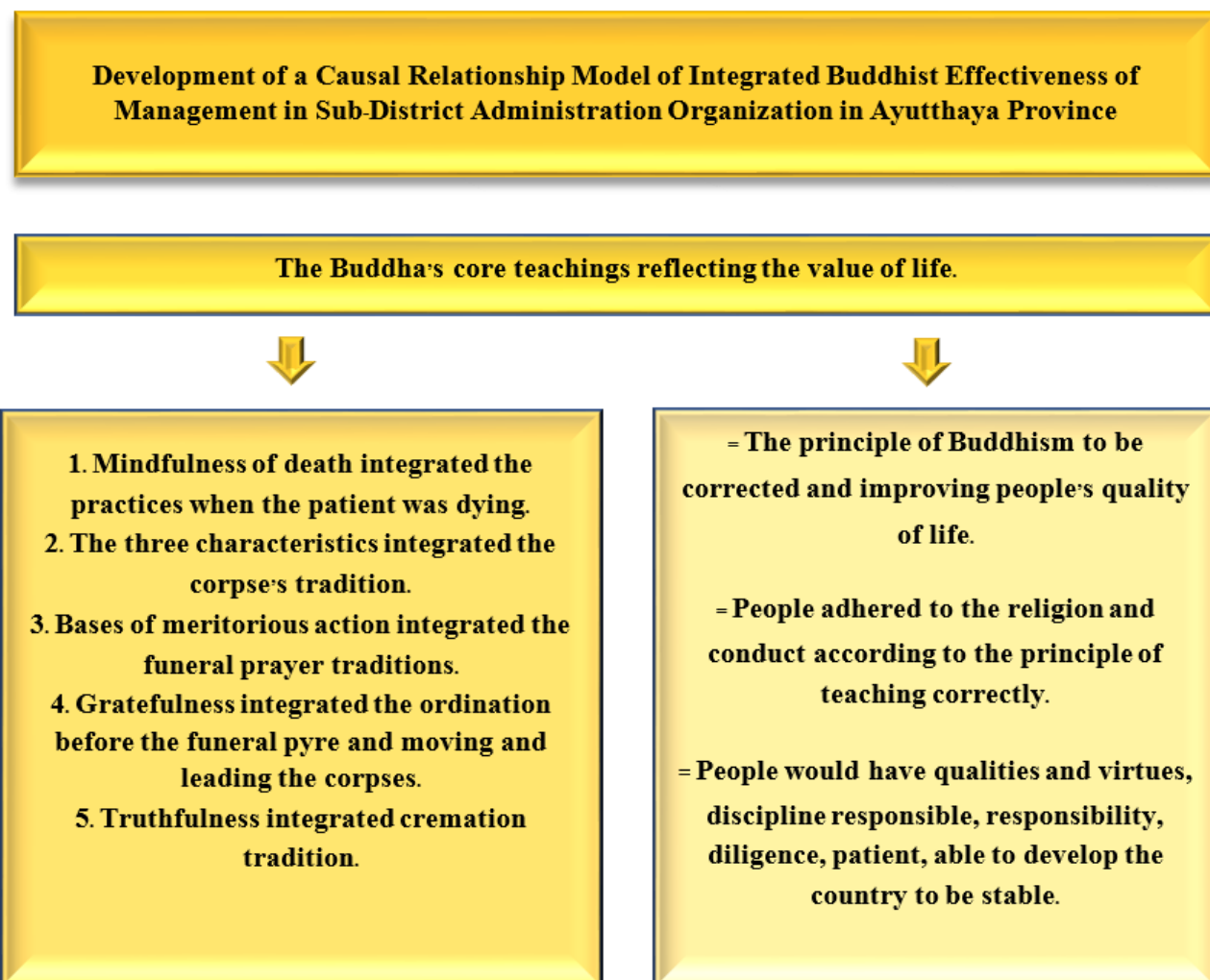


Fig.1 Body of Knowledge from Research

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestion gained from research

1. able to apply research knowledge to further study on the topic of the model of practices regarding death.
2. able to apply research knowledge to further study on the topic of the guideline for the study of the Buddha doctrine regarding death traditions of other regions.

Research implications

1. study a comparison of the funeral making merit in other regions of Thailand.
2. should study a comparison of the funeral making merit of community, what factors influenced those changes?

CONCLUSION

Buddhism describes death as a common practice of life that involves birth, age, sickness, and death. At the end of life, the funeral ceremony undertaking must be arranged. It is seen that formation is a miserable thing. Therefore, humans should hasten to practice in order to see the truth of life as impermanent. Every human who lives to wait for death is the last thing in life. For this reason, the funeral ceremony undertaking is considered to arise, exist, and fall of the elemental state. For this reason, funeral managing today is both considered an elemental state and an expression of gratitude, and bases of meritorious action as well as considering death for mindfulness of death, for heedfulness in life.

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