

# **Bodhisattvas: The Development of Quality of Life in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Society**

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## **Abstract**

The practice of Bodhisattvas is the incorporation of the status of Bodhisattvas to become a part of the Buddhist way of life. The goal is to help living beings to be free of suffering. It is applied to guide the improvement of the quality of life in the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to meet the basic needs of life. There are the following guidelines : (1) Maintaining practices in life in a correct and appropriate way to is beneficial to everyone, (2) Keeping with the tradition and culture in practices for the community, (3) Having respect for human rights where one must not violate the rights of other members of society, (4) Making improvements and continuing to develop, and (5) Inheriting and passing on good practices to all people in the community.

**Keywords :** Bodhisattvas, Improving quality of life, 21<sup>st</sup> Century society

## **Introduction**

Buddhism has an important role and influence in the Thai society, as it is a part of life. Buddhism has come to spread since the time of the Suvarnabhumi as evidenced in the Mahayana script, in the third part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD (230 AD), after the completion of the process. He sent messengers to spread Buddhism in the land. The 8<sup>th</sup> line, with Isaan and Uttar Pradesh, is the head of the travel to spread Buddhism in the territory of Suvarnabhumi.<sup>2</sup> It was absorbed into society as well. The Bodhisattva, especially has an influence on Thai society in many aspects. In addition to the influence of the Bodhisattva, Thai society is also influenced by Bodhisattvas in the Mahayana sect. In general, the Bodhisattva plays a role in the Thai society in many aspects, such as the principle of the Bodhisattva. It is the belief in the existence of the Bodhisattva in Buddhism from the past, present and future (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, 1996). The principle or belief in the original form has been modified in many ways. Traditional Buddhism was widely interpreted to be able to introduce into the society. Around the 6<sup>th</sup> Buddhist century, one group felt that the Buddhist teachings were beginning to become obsolete and useless, needing to be revised to meet the needs of the modern era, the new generation and new social conditions. Therefore, the religious texts were re-written. There is a continuation of a 4 to 5 hundred years-based belief that the scripture alone cannot inherit religion, unless than is a balance (Kosananan, 2006) between continually innovating Buddhism. It is divided into two major divisions, Theravada and Mahayana. The two sects have a different approach to practice, especially the belief of the Bodhisattva. Theravada and Mahayana began their mission differently. Though both sects have a similar final destination, the idea of reaching the destination is different. The Theravada Party is committed to self-fulfillment, prior to teaching others. Mahayana has been idealized. Instead of practicing self-abstinence, Mahayana is a new

ideology, where self will be the last. Because the two religions have different ideas about the Bodhisattva, it has a great influence on the Buddhist society, especially Buddhists in the Mekong River. From past to present, the roles and influence of the Bodhisattva has infiltrated the Buddhist way of life in the region, such as the practice of becoming a Buddha of persons, customs and architecture (Thepsawat, 1998).

Nowadays, Thai society has changed over time. This is the age of information, technology, and modern science. The emphasis on the quality of human life in society has changed in the object and values. This change has caused many problems such as health and economic problems, leading to poverty, stress, and unemployment. In addition there is a problem of creating a family and the problem of moral degradation in culture. It is a problem that causes mental problems, which becomes a social problem that people in the country are currently facing. As psychological development has not developed, the material progress of this change leads to problematic conditions, having an impact on life. The most worrisome problem is that mental problems are the underlying problem of other problems, as the mind is the most important element. That makes us think of actions, both good and evil. The Buddha's teachings have been a reminiscent of life's problems because of their karma or actions. As Buddha said, in that way, that's a good thing. "Karma kills animals so badly and finely." (Bannaraji, 1986, p.9).

The problem of life in Thai society is a barrier to the life of Buddhists because of the lack of Buddhist principles: (1) lack of diligence in work or education (2) Spending a lot of money (3) Having a bad friend, which recommends to go to the wrong direction, such as to go gambling, steal, abuse drug, commit pedophilia. (4) Living through the flow of desire (lust), to be full of greed over status, thus causing problems in the way of life of Thai Buddhists. However these problems can be solved by Buddhist principles. By adopting the practice of the Bodhisattva as a model to handle those problems that will result in happiness that is a key factor of good quality of life itself.

Bodhisattva refer to one who has resolved to attain enlightenment for the helping of his fellow beings (Phra Brahmaganabhorn, 2008). Bodhisattva plays a role in the concept of the person in the present state of society. To practice, Bodhisattva is who is creating the glory. Similar to the king, who is respected by the people. Bodhisattva who came down to create the prestige or the Great Thera in the north of Thailand, popularly known as "Kruba". The "Kruba" is believed to be a Bodhisattva, for example Kruba Srivichai, Kruba Boon Chum, etc. The belief is derived from the practice of the Bodhisattva. It is compared to the way of life of the rabbi, such as helping people, creation of Kruba Srivichai, and Saints of the Millions, and those who are the model to follow the Bodhisattva. There is a belief that the rabbi is a Bodhisattva who was reincarnated, or a merit who comes down to the world. The rabbi himself has the desire to be a monk to please animals of the world.

There is a role and influence of the Bodhisattva in the future in the Thai Buddhist society. It is the role of the virtuous Buddha in the scriptures, such as the future genealogy. Dhamma Mara Devi formulas, etc., especially in the wreaths - the formula. The depiction of virtue off the Vesak Maha Vadhana is that there is one message as follows, Phra Srinagaram. This will be enlightened as the Buddha in the future has a divine Order of Merit which went up to heaven to tell the people that if anyone has the desire to experience the religion of Sri Rattanakosin, they should listen to Vesuvian Jataka to finish in a day and a night and worship with candles, incense candles, flowers, such as lotus flower, Ratchapruerk, chopped vegetables and more. To complete a thousand flowers. The merit is that it leads to the religion of the Holy Grail of the noble. In summary, the virtues are as follows.

1. Will be born in the era of the noble Lord Sri Noble, which will occur as a Buddha?
2. Will have to go to paradise heaven?

3. Will not be born in the wild?
4. Will be of good fortune?
5. Will be supported to Nirvana?

## **Qualities of the Bodhisattva**

There are scholars who gave the meaning of the Bodhisattva as the involvement in the enlightenment (enlightenment is the wisdom of the Four Noble Truths), or the desire of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva help others out of suffering. **Bodhisattva** means being enlightened and becoming Buddha, through being a Buddhist monk who is practicing the virtues of the Bodhisattva, to give and not expect anything in return. When given food even, do not expect anything. It will be a merit to eat as a basis for living without giving return, and also means sacrifice for others as well.

Precepts are basic practices in Buddhism in order to control physical conduct and speech in a good and normal way. This is a rule that prohibits the use of basic solutions. This leads to a peaceful and uninhabited society. The passion that has been involved in the reduction of some of the clothing, where there is no seeking of new clothes or to buy more. The knowledge is a thorough knowledge of the cause, where you clearly know the sin of blame.

Perseverance and effort is the path to success. Do everything with diligence. Dare to face adversity. If there are any obstacles, it will be get rid of in the end, do not despair. Tolerance to regular treatment of their condition, whether wounded or in undesirable situations. It is as stable as the earth. Sincerity and honesty is the directing to wisdom. The truth is that you the direction to morals, truth to the physical, verbal and mental.

Prayer, determination, and desire is important. One's intent is to concentrate on one's own, to set one's mind for what is sacred, to wish for what is needed from the sacred, for example, to pray for the blessings of God. I pray in my heart to travel, etc.

Kindness, friendliness, goodwill to others, is important. Mercy will have to rely on the training in daily life itself, from the person closest to us. Then gradually expand the circle up until the person who is an enemy. Detachment is the center of harmony.

## **Ideas for improving quality of life**

Human behavior is rooted in demand. Initially, there are 5 levels which humans face. It will have the desire to go up. If the demand is not fulfilled, it is stressful, leading to motivation, to find ways, or show behaviors that lead to the desired outcome, to reduce tension, or to satisfy the satisfaction. There are five stages of human need.

Stage 1 Physical Requirements, Physiological Needs. Basic needs such as drinking water, shelter, medicine, sleep, appropriate temperature, sexual desire.

Stage 2 Safety Needs, Safe to live, Stable job receiving pension, have life insurance.

Stage 3 Love, such as having family, friends, loved ones, being members or having relationships with others in society or community, being a member of a professional association.

Stage 4 Esteem Needs. The needs in this stage can be divided into two levels: the basic is the recognition of the status of interest, prestige, reputation, influence, etc. in addition to the

basic requirements. At this level of demand is recognized and praised. There is a high level of demand, such as confidence in performance, success, role model, independence.

Stage 5 Self Actualization need are the most demanding of human behavioral development. Typically, this level of demand will occur when there is an initial demand. When the response is received. The need to understand themselves. The ability to achieve maximum self-esteem, As Maslow explains, "What a human being can do, he must be that."

## **Analysis of the Bodhisattva with the development of quality of life**

The influence of the Bodhisattva is due to the fact that people in Buddhist society have adopted the guidelines and status of the Bodhisattva as a part of the Buddhist way of life. The Bodhisattva is meant to rescue the animals from suffering. Bodhisattva is born from the belief that human development from the pursuit of knowledge. And in Buddhist society, the basic belief is of karma, where you receive good karma if you practice good deeds, and bad karma if you practice bad deeds. The analysis is applied to guide the development of quality of life under 21st century society to meet the basic needs of life. Which have the following guidelines.

### **SELF-CONDUCT**

The practice of self-conduct. Act on what is right, lawful, by not doing anything illegal, and not to be immoral in the traditional and local culture. This is to help maintain Buddhism, traditions and culture, as well as attach importance to the care of the community and society, and behave as a good person. The fact that one person is good or bad can be observed from action. The practice of the Bodhisattva, reflect our affects with people in the world, or animal and other living things. Doing good in the sacrifice for others can be done anywhere, anytime. In addition to self-sacrifice, people should bring clarity of their practice. Bodhisattva is a role model for all of us in good deeds, by doing good and helping others without greed, sacrificing even their own lives to do good and to help others. Starting from ourselves, which will result in a model to others.

### **CUSTOMS, TRADITION, AND CULTURE**

Customs, tradition and culture are the things that people in society create together. Tradition is a culture with relatively clear conditions, that is, what the society created as legacy generations must receive. This is a great way to improve and get better at spreading the word. Creating a model resolution and the way of life and the coexistence of people in society. Identifying the unique identities of the community or society. This is due to the accumulation of experience. The wisdom of the generation. It is a symbol of the identity of the Thai people, the use of language, the gentle manners which are gentle, helpful and supportive. Each culture varies depending on the environmental constraints. And local or community resources. It also includes values, attitudes, morals, conventions, the good or the right of the people in the society. What the original society created and then passed on as inheritance to later generations as a guideline, improved, spread to other societies as well. Tradition and culture in accordance with the way of the Bodhisattva is a common practice to cultivate the sacrifice to do good to help each other to create a good quality of life.

### **RESPECT**

Respect for everyone's right in society as everyone has equal rights to live in society. Such rights must not violate the rights of other members in the society. Everyone in the society must live in solidarity, so the country will be peaceful. When people in society recognize their rights and others, they will lead the community or society to develop. When the society is strong, it will contribute to the strong nation. Respect the rights of each other, and do not violate the freedom of others. This can be expressed in many ways, such as acceptance of the opinions of others, etc. People should be protected and respectful of the individual's rights is to live independently. Character development as required. So is the right to seek happiness in life in a way that is possible and satisfying as long as it is not contrary to law, where it does not come in conflict with the peace and good morals of the people and does not violate the rights of others.

## **SPIRIT**

Everyone can be a Bodhisattva in their lives. We only have the spirit of being a Bodhisattva, that is, seeing someone else suffers. We come to pray every morning and every evening. If we understand and act as we are all walking on the path of the Bodhisattva, the journey of the Bodhisattva will lead to a better quality of life, to keep up with what has been done and what is wrong or not well enough to take into consideration, and to find a way to improve and develop a better action. This will help the society to develop happily, from the wisdom of the collective, to the things that will improve and develop continuously.

## **GOAL OF LIFE**

At the center of the heart of the people is the goal of life to be noble. Do not look at how much to do but look at the essence of action. If it is good, it is better to do even better, to devote even to life. The best succession is to cultivate the consciousness of good deeds for the common good. This is a good example for all people in the community. To sponsor a monk is an example to the youth and the people in the community, in the matter of being a good Buddhist, offering food and necessary goods, to adherence to ethics, morality and faith.

It can be seen that the approach of the Bodhisattva and the development of quality of life. It is the development of the Buddhist way of life that creates a good relationship in one's life: sacrifice, have respect for one another, adherence to common guidelines Be friendly, work with the world, as people and animal and living things together.

## **Summary and Recommendation**

The practice of the Bodhisattva is to bring the status of the Bodhisattva to be a part of the Buddhist way of life. The goal is to help the living beings out of suffering. The analysis is a guide to the development of the quality of life in 21<sup>st</sup> century to meet the basic needs of life. There are the following guidelines. It is important to keep in mind that it is important to have a healthy lifestyle. Tradition and culture are the norms for collective practice. Respect for human rights which does not violate the rights of other members of society. Improvements and development is a good for all people in the community.

## **Suggestion**

1. Pay attention to the sacrifice for the community, to do what is beneficial for the

majority.

2. Encourage the public to cultivate the public consciousness from childhood through the learning activities so that the child absorbs good things.

3. Adults should practice for the common good to be a good role model for children.

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