

# Modernity and Buddhist Communication in Thai Society

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**Abstract.** The aim of this article is to present the modernity and the changes in ethical communication in Buddhism. The study showed that the ideology of “Nibbana” of Buddhism in Thai society had changed according to the social context, and reducing due to the differences in the “supermundane” and the “mundane world”. Thai society had changed to a modern society. Buddhism institution created a form of ethical communication with the characteristics of entertainment and adapted into a tourism space. This creation marked a new relationship between the Buddhism and the investors in communication, both on a large and local scale.

*Keywords:* Modernity, Buddhist, Ethics Communication, Thai, Tourism

## Introduction

To understand the social changes in a historical ideology base, along with comprehending human development one must gain important understanding about the ideology of “time” as kind of thinking that relates human to society. Social change is therefore a base in creating an understanding to the concept of time. Time itself is an important force that determine human’s social interaction in everyday life. Understanding the concept of time is thus an important key to understand the society. (Kitirianglarp, 2013; Sattayanurak, 2012 : 9-10)

According to concept of time coined by Henri Lefebvre, capitalism had divided time into work time— a period of time when we sell our labor to the system in exchange for the wages. This is a system that makes life become meaningless. The remedy for such situation is making free time valuable. Free time is defined as a time when you can be certain that it is your ‘own’ time. However, at the same period, free time is also reproduced under capitalism—thanks to the introduction of consumerism where people consume during their free time such as listening

to music, watching comedies, traveling, etc. (Henri Lefebvre, 1991)

In Thai society which guided by Buddhism, the culture of using free time might also be seen as a kind of Buddhist teachings that command a more relaxed atmosphere, the adjustment of religious spaces to the expansion of tourism, or the designated time for Buddhist preaching that rely on people’s free time. However, the success of these Buddhist communications still needs to rely on the network that connects and create various kinds of power structure. This article aimed at presenting the changes to modernity of Thai society and the adjustment of the Buddhist communication.

## Literature Review

There might not be many studies done yet regarding the topic of changes in religious ethical communication since it has not been a popular topics amongst academics. However, one can cite a study by Jantiga Supapong (2000) concerning the role of Thai newspaper in laying out a frame around the social ideology when reporting the story of Dharmakaya temple. The research pointed out the fact that Dharmakaya is a modern kind of Buddhism

created to respond the need of people who want a kind of Buddhism doctrine that meets their own need. Another study was conducted by Valeerat Anutarawattanakun (2002) about trend of thoughts that remained stand still and the thoughts that was on the move. The study was carried out on the case of Dharmanunda nun who wants to be ordained; which was a very new thing in Thai society. The study came to three conclusions regarding the roles of the newspaper: those who disagreeing with the ordination of female monks, those who agree and support the ordination of female monks, and those who are in the middle which creating a space for other people to express their opinions. The analysis of these three standpoints concludes that all these thinking were being controlled by 2 kinds of illusion: illusion from career and illusion of gender aspect. The fact that the newspaper were being controlled by these 2 illusions made all newspapers being researched (5, to be exact) putting in the exact same information/facts but interpret the meaning differently according to their own standpoint. Another factors contributed for each newspaper's frame are reporters, sources, and the organization policies. Therefore, when new religion emerged, there will always be two trends of reporters; those who don't want to see changes and those who want to see the changes. Newspapers are therefore acting as the "controlling mechanisms" trying to steal the thinking space. The weapons used by newspapers to apply that controlling mechanisms are language.

The study by Attachak Suttayanurak (2012) explained the changes among Thai elites worldview since the time of King Rama IV up until 2475 B.E. The study traced back the changes implied in the concept of time that passed down by Rattanakosin period after being influenced by other countries. The Thai elites at the time hold on the experiential reality led to the conflict between the elite groups and the Sangha who still holds on Buddhist concept of time. The study of Phra Phisal Visalo (2544) about Buddhism and Civil Society stated that the Sangha can no longer take the role of the society leader in terms of wisdom. It had separated itself from society and limited its role to just perform ceremony. The main factor was due to the problems within the Sangha structure itself: a power centric. Another research from Phra Phisal Visalo (2552) about "The Future of Thai Buddhism: The Trend and Way out From the Crisis" explained that the crisis Buddhism is generated from the fact that Buddhism hasn't made any adjustment since the past (King Rama

V) which caused the Sangha to be further away from the community. The only connection left is performing the ceremony.

This situation is worsening due to the expansion of globalization led to consumerism. Temples became a market where Buddhist people go to buy good luck charms. Even many Buddhist ceremonies became available only through purchasing (Eoseewong in Sopolsiri (ed.), 2013). It can be explained further about the current Thai society that the transition into modernity is includes capitalism, communication, and education.

The expansion of the state and scientific ideas had created a crisis due to the fact that Buddhism no longer applies to the modern livelihood of Thai people. The role of Buddhism that is left is solely to perform ceremonies. Many rituals outside the realm of Buddhist beliefs are also being practiced in a wide area. The people who perform the rituals and the people who receive the service opened up the opportunities for people to negotiate with the supernatural through the rituals of giving money and some certain practices.

## **Research Methods**

This research is a qualitative research by collecting the data and information mainly through studying the documents as a primary data such as government's document, the temples' or religious institutions' document, or other distributed documents compiled by certain authors. There were secondary data as compiled from newspapers, textbooks, articles, previous research, thesis, and Internet. The validity of the data was achieved through Triangulation methods by proving the correctness and accuracy of information being used by the researcher through checking the triangulation aspects: time, place and people.

## **Changes of Buddhist Ideology in Thai Society**

Thai Buddhism has always relied on Tri Bhume (Three Worlds: Earth, Heaven and Hell) especially before the time of King Rama IV. The worldview of Thai people starting from the Elite all the way to commoners who still believe in the idea of Three World, heaven and hell, as a space for the people after they pass away. The belief in Karma play a huge role on how people live their lives while paying the respect of other people since it's a kind of belief that take into consideration for the next life or the life after death. Therefore, in the First Thai Enacted Law

created under the reign of King Rama I, people are not allowed to commit adultery by painting a scary picture of hell about certain punishment for adulterers for tens of thousands years. During the time of King Rama II, a law was drafted to prohibit the purchasing and the consuming of opium. Such violations will be sanctioned by after death punishment that must be endured for a long period of time. Also, during the time of King Rama III in the predition during Songkran in the year 1211 (Chula Sakarat), there was a following warning (Phra Phisal Visalo, 2013. page 7-9)

*"Anyone who are not following the five precepts and refrain from the fourteen sins, that person will surely go to hell"*

The belief about heaven, hell, and the next life are starting to fade away. Buddhist ideology is also fading. In a novel written by King Rama IV, the idea of "Nibbana (nirvana)" was still mentioned but wasn't emphasize to the same level as the previous Thai elites such as King Rama I who believed wholeheartedly in Nibbana, along with the determination in becoming the next Lord Buddha. The idea of nirvana still existed among the elite prior to the time of King Rama IV. The belief in Nibbana started to fade due to the fact that reaching Nibbana was too difficult for normal person in his or her lifetime. The explanation was "people who reached Nibbana knows that there will never be that person in this day and age"; or the explanation by Chao Phraya Thipphakorn that "Today, there is no more a person who is filled with merits". This marked the end of the Buddhist ideology on nirvana and the kind of dharma that will contribute to the next life. Dharma that rewords within this lifetime has been the goal of life and marked the success in life (Visalo, 2013: 12-19).

Buddhism relates to the lives of Thai people had been linked to the innovation called "nation". The effort in building a sense of nationalism, the relationship with one's nation can be seen clearly under the reign of King Rama IV. Especially the effort in blending Buddhism and Nation into one concept. For instance, the explanation that religion can not be separated from the nation, or the need for Thai people to maintain themselves in Buddhism which is the national religion; or the emphasis that loving the nation and protecting the nation are the actions that Lord Buddha didn't prohibit. Fighting the enemy that invades the land and Buddhism is a responsibility for men to be enacted, and fight as well as they could. However, eventually, the ideology of Buddhism was cut down to only good deeds and bad deeds

which is similar to a saying "you reap what you sow" (Visalo, 2013 : 40-48).

During the Age of Development Era under Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat which brought National Economic and Social Development Plan, it was found that the idea of detachment as one of the focus in Buddhism became an obstacle in developing the country (capitalism). If people focus on the idea of detachment and are content in what they have and what they can find, they will lack the will to achieve more. This could lead to the slow pace in the development of the country or even the failure. At that time, Field Marshal Sarit monopolized all the power: his main role was making sure that the monks during that time cease to teach these kinds of belief people. That was the starting point in the creation of the ideology and the expansion of the ideology in connection with materials as a mean to develop the country (Thongsawatchai, 2017. Retrieved on 26 March 2017). This is an excerpt of speech by Field Marshal Sarit reinstated the notion.

*"In the 3-year and 6-year economic project that the government is trying to build through the National Economic Development Council, it is needed to encourage the people to be hard working, endurance, and build up their self-reliance ideology both in the personal level and the national level. This is what the government and me are trying to ask you. The teaching of Lord Buddha can go in many directions. Those teaching can be chosen and used to teach or persuade people to do good. There are teachings that teaches people to not want a lot, detached, not wanting to do anything, not wanting to want anything, no need to seek for something since you cannot take anything with you. These kinds of teaching might be good for one era but not suitable for this revolutionized era where we want a lot of progress and advancement. We need to pick the dharma that teach people to work hard, being caution, not hoping to rely on other people but themselves and are unified. I would like to ask the Sangha to teach people in this direction which will help the economic plan and all the work that the government has been trying to accomplish and the improvement of the religion itself.*

(Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, 1960 in Thongsawatchai, 2017).

That's sound like an implore (force) from Field Marshal Sarit that shows the inappropriate nature of the teaching considering the social situations at the time with the need of advancement. The Sangha should teach the villagers according to the trend of development which discussing the hard-working ethic and finding careers, which is one way to the development plan. As can be extracted from the above excerpt, the demand of modernization for the country was include 'improvement' of religion.

Conflict in the Buddhist ideology can also be seen in the discussion between M.R. Kukrit Pramote and Buddhadasa on the issue of Sunyata or empty mind. Buddhadasa proposed that the meaning of Dharma must at least acquired three components: (1) First Dharma is everything, no exception; (2) Second Dharma is everything, each thing has its own rule and the rule of Dharma is consisted of "nature" that means everything, no exception and "normal" is nature; (3) Third, it become the responsibility between each thing to obey that rule. It can be concluded also that Dharma is the thing to know, to act upon, and to prevent any circumstances that will cause suffering. Dharma is not holding on and the result from the action will lead to "enlightened mind", which is the heart of Buddhism. These principles can be adapted in life in the form of working unselfishly according to all responsibilities bear to us by not being biased towards us or ours, not holding on to anything, working with emptiness of mind; being empty from a feeling of our existence or from our selfishness because we are not real. We are illusion (M.R. Kukrit Pramote & Buddhadasa).

While M.R. Kukrit Pramote problematized the word "emptiness of mind" that Buddhadasa brought up as a status and the principle for the monks to practice Dharma, applying the same principle to the layperson might prove to be difficult. Working with emptiness of mind is not considered as 'real' work. Not us nor other people are benefiting, not even the country is benefiting from the work. Therefore, this kind of work lacks goals. Why work? Or is wisdom solely mean everything doesn't exist. Nothing belongs to us. When we realized that, we can no longer work, even to run our own business. Later, it made the status of empty minded conflicted with the reality of the layperson world, as M.R. Kukrit had said:

*"If you say that working with emptiness mind is good for the worldly work, I don't believe that if we were a soldier and have to fight in a war, fighting with emptiness mind or shooting a gun with empty mind*

*will define a good soldier. I don't believe that no matter what you say. If you had said since you work in this world, you should stay within this world; working with emptiness mind, don't hold on to anything. If the work turned out to be good or bad, or even if it turned out bad, we will not suffer, then I will believe you. But you were saying that if we work with empty mind, then the work will be great. I don't believe that work will be great. The work of this world is conflicted with the idea of emptiness mind, or the end of suffering. Happiness of this world is considered suffering in Dharma. The success of the work will have meaning in this world if the mind is emptiness, or the success in Dharma. But those two cannot happen at the same time.*

The discussion about emptiness of mind can be concluded from M.R. Kukrit that lust and attachments are the cause of all suffering. However the real problem of action is suffering. "Mundane World" is full of chaos, full of attachments, which is in conflict with the Dharma principle of purity. Practicing Dharma following the teaching of Buddha will produce meaningless world. The success in this world means, having your own place in the world, receiving good opportunities, or be convenient. People believe that these are the result of doing good things, not from practicing Dharma, which is the thing you will need to choose.

The changes in the Buddhist Ideology that was influenced by changes of thoughts that reflect the rational, scientific way of thinking of the Thai elites in the past. It was believed by the elite group within the country at a later period of time that the Buddhist ideology is the thing that held the country back from producing progressive thoughts. The conflict between the "supermundane" and the "mundane world" points out the difficulties in applying Buddhist ideology for everyday life.

## **Modernity and Buddhist Ethical Communication**

The changes of Buddhist communication will be presented into three issues: (1) Time and Order Within Modern Society; (2) Ethical Communication of "Religion for Entertainment and Leisure"; and (3) Ethical Communications Towards "Religion of Tourism".

### **Time and Order Within the Modern Society**

The changes in modern timing that shifted to production and production discipline control in this industrial age. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, there was a development in time use to control and build up disciplines in the work up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century; for instance, alarming system. Using bells to remind and tell the duration of working time and the production that can be seen in many cities with industrial development. The construction of the clock tower as a tool to measure the quality of human work in measuring the amount of time, the effort in designing worker that can work more within the limited amount of time. This will provide more excess of the production to the investors while the minimum wage is still the same (Thomson, 1967: 56-97; Kitirianglarp, 2557).

The work timetable is not only controlling the disciplines during working hour under the capitalist industrial systems, but also expand to outside the working hour; such as overtime or bonuses, and the life time of the workers outside the factories, the preparation of the work according to the company's requirement, after work time management, and the schedule is still a tool in creating the disciplines to the workers that helps create a unity within the production system. Workers are required to come in and work, get off work, and rests, all under time requirement (Klatookwan, 2014).

So, the free time is therefore a valuable thing for people under the capitalist system; creating a time and finding an area. Due to the search for meaning life of the people in the city in responding to the physical and mental responses to fill in the mind, ethical communication had been changed both in the content and the form to go along with the time schedule and lifestyle of people in the city.

### **Ethical Communication "Religion for Entertainment and Leisure"**

The changes in society came into the institutional structures starting from family units, community institutions, and religious institution. People within the society use almost all their time to work and find income. The free time became valuable assets to human lives. Resting and relaxations in finding freedom to your heart's content, as well as breaking out of the temporary bondage of their work and responsibility, Temples (traditional) no longer play a role in developing the social livelihood. The preaching at the temple is therefore meaningless without audiences. Religious institution therefore started to adjust their method of communication to more proactive

methods; creating an identity to create a symbol and memory concerning religion and pushing a more modern kind of communication under the concept of fun, content, calm, and conscious, which is to adapt the content of Dharma and adding fun into those stories. It is a way to open up to the receivers of the message to receive knowledge, calmness, until achieving consciousness and fully understanding Dharma.

The preaching mostly focus on the entertainment; the relaxation integrated with humor and the style of preaching that aimed at entertaining. Making it simple, nothing complex, integrated with the perception of emotions such as pride, impressed, or sometimes focusing on the emotional destruction such as heart broken, disappointment from love, or stories that stir the emotion. These had all been shifted to the new kind of preaching through entertainment. Starting with entertaining while adding in Dharma from time to time, and ending with emotional stuff. This kind of method became successful from several monks being invited to many TV shows. The indicator to this is the number of viewers and the increasing interest and rating until collaboration between investors in the media and the Buddhist priest network.

The starting of the shows concerning Dharma in a new form that is different from what people perceive preaching to be, from the collaboration between the Dharma network and Grammy Television Company Limited, new show about the preaching of Dharma were created. It is a mixture of entertainment, humor, fun, while ingrained with the Dharma content and was widely accepted by people. Monks were recreated with new image, focusing on the monks as individuals which goes along well with the Buddhist culture of "creating a kind of monks with the merits of a leader". This is to respond to the receivers of the message with primary faith in the religion, with the cultural structure and the institution of the media that infiltrate in every aspect of life, the old style of preaching no longer goes along with modern social schedule. This new kind of teaching Dharma no longer focuses on the teaching, but aimed more toward creating an image or branding of the Dharma teacher. For instance, the characteristics of being friendly with the audiences, being hilarious and fun. This is different from the kind of Dharma teaching that focuses on being sacred and serious. The monks had been invited to different events similar to talk shows by famous people. Audiences tend to memorize the speaker than Dharma content from the talk.

For example, there is one creative Dharma TV show by KTV Broadcasting Co. Ltd. That

produces the show on Monday to Friday at 11:05-11:10 a.m. The time for the show is limited to five minutes which is too short and can't explanation of a more complex Dharma. The style of the show is only 1-2 minutes long about the problems that is difficult to conclude within a limited amount of time. A monk is invited to answer questions on this short TV show. The content was adjusted to be shorter, as well as the explanation, which aim at the audiences being able to adapt to their daily lives. The content and the script for each show will be determined and prepared. The producers will inform the issue or the topic that he/she want to cover during each show which will need to be shorten due to the limited time, while adding in entertaining message to draw the attention from the audience to the Dharma.

Time constrain is important in presenting Dharma through the media. Citizen in this modern society pay more attention to time especially in the urban where the concept of time is more intense and is a valuable asset. Therefore, listening to Dharma teaching is considered "a waste of time". Shortly Dharma shows focus on creating an attraction to the audience through a fun and less serious method, a relaxing time for the audience in this new age who were having an intense time at work while creating good quality of life and pay attention to time.

#### *Ethical Communication "Religion for Tourism"*

The crisis on faith towards Buddhism within Thai society consist of more reason. Due to the changes in the dimension of relationship between the religious institution and its people. The globalized system world, people are paying more attention to competitions; such as competition in trading, business, work, and the emphasis on "time". This had formed a society in which competitions can be seen in every aspect of life with high risks and survivals. Every activity goes by really fast to compete with "time". Through the evolution of technology, people have to time to go to the temple or to make merit. They have no time to support the religion. The context of society changed and created a gap between religion and society. The changes to the content and the method in presenting Dharma under this new context needs to along the line of easy to understand, quick, not prolonging (Chaveemon Sukpaibool 2010. 77)

The existence of religion for tourism under the concept of building up an institution to increase the spreading of Dharma to the international level, such as the case of

Cherntawan International Meditation Center which was established as a center of research for Buddhism and spreading Buddhism out to the people while pushing it to the international level. The administration work was divided into three aspects: *One* Education – aimed at spreading Buddhism to the world. *Two* Economy – encourage self-reliance both in the economy and mind and *Three* Spirit – open a curriculum in meditation to those interested both with the country and those from other countries.

For education, Buddhism is being spread out to the world citizen through preaching, teaching, and lecturing, which is all done at the center. It could be said that the learning is done through tourism or what is called (Religion Tourism). Pramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi (V. Vudhijaya) explained that:

*"From going around Cherntawan farm, we can see the serenity and the beauty of nature and the buildings, as well as other projects such as agricultural area, art center, and etc. The imagination plays a huge role in every step of life. One day, I planted an Inthanin tree which is only 1 cubic high. I was asked why did I plant Inthanin tree? Why not grow something that is more useful? My answer was, you don't know anything. This Inthanin tree that I grew, one day, it will be 5 meters tall. This area will be a road full of flowers. The flowers will bloom and people will come visit. Come to take pictures. This will be a very romantic flowery road. That person walked away thinking I was delirious. After 5 years, Inthanin flower blooms and this place turned into a tourist spot, a place where TV show came to film. This past New Year, there were over 500,000 people who came and walk through this tunnel of orchid with purple Inthanin trees growing on the side. (Vajiramedhi, 2016 : 50-51)*

Based on the explanation, it can be seen that the area for Religious Center or Meditation Center are areas aimed at tourism in order to attract people come to the temple and learn Buddha's Dharma. Setting up the place to be suitable for relaxing while going in line with the importance of "time" for the people who are in the urban area who view "free time" as valuable asset in their daily lives. Therefore, the design of the area for studying Dharma for tourism consist of two aspects: (1) The need for tourism for relaxation from the regular work (middle class); and (2) Learning about new kind of Dharma for those coming to visit the center. This new kind of Dharma learning is different from the past of

learning. This new kind of Religion Tourism opens up the opportunity for people to come in and define their own understanding through all the exhibitions; such as the orchid arch, hall of prayer, art hall where art pieces from famous artists were stored, and architecture of novice, etc.

The mission of the soul which consist of the training on meditation for both Thai people and people from abroad. The curriculum consists of a 1 day meditation for Chief Executive Officer (CEO), 2 days curriculum for students, 3 days meditation for business people and government officers, 4 days meditation for people in general, 7 days meditation for foreigners, and 9 days meditation for priest or monk. These were designed to meet the needs of the people with different occupations such as CEO, workers within the organizations, and government's officers. Especially the curriculum for the business group which will have a length of 3 days, mostly from Friday to Sunday. The meditation will focus on "how to manage the desires (killes)" or desire management by pointing out how those can be dealt with. What to do when you get angry, what to do when you get greedy, what to do when you are overcome with illusion. As a layperson, one need to maintain the relationship with the family, work, or business without the need to get rid of all the desires.

Therefore, the spreading of the religion through tourism is the adjustment of religion to the changes of the society. The life style of the people who are competing with time and the need to travel to relax and to get away from the intensity and the boredom of the rules and regulations that are binding human to this new society. Religion tourism therefore opens up the opportunity for people to express their freedom, reasons, and the definition of religion to fit in with the life style.

### **The Relationship of Buddhism and Ethical Communication**

The relationship of the religion network such as the "Dharma Delivery" group had expanded to the production process of the media. The expansion of the ethical way to the people in the wide area through working together with the media, such as Grammy Television Co. Ltd. With the role of producing Dharma show with Phramaha Sompong Talaputto is the main person and presenting the information through TV shows.

The production process that the Dharma Delivery Group is responsible for is the style of

the show, both in the presentation the components within the show, and the form of the show that is like Talk Shows with Phramaha Sompong as the main host, all the way to the discussion between the host and the audiences in the opening of the show, before moving on to the next part of the show, and at the end of the show. The presentation focuses on the entertainment, humor, and the integration of the content through the show. Phramaha Sompong can determine the content himself. As for the other production process, it is under the responsibility of Grammy Television Co. Ltd. who is a more professional producers that responds to the need of society and find ways to make Dharma Delivery become more popular in a wider audience's (Chuchart, 2009 : 267-269)

This new kind of Dharma TV show that is different from the old style of media through the collaboration of Dharma Delivery Network and Grammy Television Co. Ltd., came from the creativity of Sathaporn Phanichraksaphong (CEO of Grammy at the time), that had watched the Dharma teaching by Phramaha Sompong through a television and thought that was different. It was a new kind of Dharma teaching that contained the entertainment, humor, and fun, while containing the actual content at the same time. After the broadcasting, the show was well received by the audiences. Later his came up with an idea of producing a show with Phramaha Sompong as the host. They got in touched and talked until the show was produced to entertain the people (Chuchart, 2009 : 264-265).

An image of Phramaha Sompong Tallaputto had been recreated focusing on an individual that goes along well with the Buddhist culture; "Creating a monk with the character of having lots of merit and a leader". This had been ingrained in the believers' mind. The religion, the cultural structure, and the media institution that had integrated into people's lives had create a sense of importance to this new kind of Dharma teaching that doesn't focusing on the content as the main goal, but more on creating an image and the branding of the speaker; for instance, a characteristics of friendliness, funny and entertaining, This is different from the kind of Dharma teaching that focuses on being sacred and serious. The speaker being invited to different events similar to talk show hosts by famous people. The audiences remember the speaker more than the Dharma teaching. This created characteristic is an important part that makes people pays more attention to the show.

The success in "Set the Adapted Dharma" with the outstanding work called "Dharma with

Wings” that Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi had adapted was turned into a drama broadcast through Channel 3 indicate that it is an important mark an important point where Buddhism will be rooted (concept of Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi) in Thai society one more time. Along with the popularity of the media, The PBS therefore adapted the content for it to be different from the show that was aired on Channel 3 by shifting the focus on the structure of the characters or the content of the show but focusing on the speaker, who is Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi through a question and answer style based on the content of the adapted Dharma book which will be broadcast on holidays.

The trend and the role in spreading the new kind of religion had been released in different for compared to the traditional institution or temples to be on books, magazines, or articles with the collaboration from different publishers such as Amarin Printing Ltd. who planned the every process of the marketing until they were able to build the popularity from the people in the city. From an unknown alias who wrote an article to a monk with the popularity of a celebrity. This was done through the delivery of the content through different kinds of medias such as television channels, radios, or entertainment channel that are not different from movie stars or other celebrities. Apart from this, he also received invitation to give speech, teaching positions, lecturers, and other events that were mostly held by the government such as the National Defense College of Thailand or King Prajadhipok's Institute which were a popular place for the military, police, and high ranking government officer normally attends (Sukpaibool, 2010)

Background of the spreading of the morality and the ethic of Buddhism according to Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi, he received the collaboration from Amarin Publisher in planning out the strategies as well as the interest and the faith of the CEO. All these time, the amount of Dharma books wasn't as successful as it should be when compared to the book sales from other books. Therefore, the trend of the spreading of this new kind of Buddhism by Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi became more interesting and spread out to the society more. The CEO and the Publisher therefore became interested in this new kind of “New Spreading of Dharma” and therefore negotiate and collaborated in building up the capacity in religious work to be able to compete with normal books and pushed Dharma books to

be one of the important products for people in this new age. Amarin Publisher therefore became an important component in the spreading of Buddhism by Phramaha Vudhijaya through the focus on donations to the building of religious centers in urban areas, especially in Bangkok, creating printed media such as religious books, biography, articles, souvenirs, videos, bookmarks, calendars, postcards, shirts, and etc.

The Dharma network of Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi had spread to the real estate groups and big investors' group who helped in producing the TV shows and printing religious books starting from “Life Magic on the Double” written by Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi and co-written with Vikrom Kromadit, big real estate tycoon as well as networking with Charoen Phokphand Ltd and created a live reality Dharma show called “Novice Project, Planting Dharma Wisdom” that provide the opportunity for both boys and girls to be representatives in learning about Dharma at Cherntawan directly from a monk. or through a True commercial, A Series about the life of “Buddha” on True4U and also through Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi's personal Facebook that were followed by more than 6 million people.

Apart from building a religious network with the investors in communications and real estate, as well as the local networks in the area that are still important as can be seen on Children's Day in 2015 under the theme of “World Peace Rely on the Power of Youth's Wisdom” at Chiangrai Kindergarten School, Chiangrai Municipality, by General Winai Phattiyakul, former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defense who came to do the opening ceremony and had invite Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi to preach on the topic of the knowledge and morals in becoming a good person. Here is part of the preaching:

“Children are the hope of the world. As Buddha had taught use that children are the hope of mankind. Therefore, adults need to find ways for the children to be the hope and leave the hope with them. Apart from displaying their abilities, they need to have the knowledge along with the Dharma. With just knowledge, it can be dangerous, or with just Dharma, they might be a good person but don't know how to work. These two things need to come together” (www.manager.co.th, 10 January 2015, Retrieved on 7 November 2016).

Children's Day in 2016 was held on January 9th, 2016 at Cherntawan Center under



the concept of "World Happiness Depend on the Power of Wisdom from Youth", also received a honor from General Winai Phattiyakul, former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defense to be the chairperson of the event. There were also people who were interested in the event and came to join such as Mrs. Sasinee Phattiyakul, Dr. Kiattisak Kanlayasirivat, Ms. Atchara Ittirojanakul, Assign Resident Company, Mr. Apichat and Ms. Yaowapha Jitviriyakul, Mr. Pichai Chooekawong, Mr. Chaiyan Visuttada, Pattana Wichakarn (2535) Company Ltd., Prasert Sombat & Son Co., Ltd., Ms. Warin Ittirojanakul, Mr. Watthana Chaisathaporn, Gen. Chavalit Charuchinda and Government Savings Bank. (www.manager.co.th, 9 January 2016, Retrieved on 7 November 2016).

The opening ceremony of the Buddhist Economics University at Cherntawan Center was supported by the Government Savings Bank to continue the Farmer School project where Dharma is being taught alongside doing agriculture by Emeritus Professor Dr. Kasem Watanachai, Privy and Phramaha Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi giving out Buddhist Economy degree to 82 students of the second batch (2/2557) of the University and giving out souvenir pins to the supporters of the projects as well as the Sirindhorn Bunnarot Book Car project, wooden structure at the university as well as the seed bank and the 20 Wah Lanna Style Flag as a symbol of the local wisdom. Donors from GSB, government officers, and many people came to participate in the ceremony.

The religious communication network had a huge role in the success of the spreading of Buddhism. Apart from the limitation on the religious context that are complex, media investors is an important factor that made this new ethical religion ideas more simple to understand and reaching a huge number of people. There were many productions that led to the spreading of this new religion. The role of the local network became a mechanism in creating the acceptance in the fact that the local area can expand to all regions in the northern North region of Thailand.

## Conclusion

The changes in the Buddhist Ideology were influenced by the thinking of Thai elites in the past who had led the country into modernity. The thought of Buddhist concepts were looked at as a factor holding the country back and the limitation of some of the ideology in applying them to the daily lives. Going into modernity, the religion had adapted itself to the lifestyle of

the people who had progressed along with the urban society. There are needs for relaxation time, Religious Tourism therefore open a way for men to express their freedom in interprets religion according to their own understandings and goes along with their daily lives. The important factor that contributes to the success is the way the religion is being spread out. This was done through the collaboration with the big communicating industry, mega investors, and the creation of the local network.

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