

Effects of the Way of Life and Behavior of Monks of Wat Pa on People Life Quality

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วันที่รับบทความ (Received) : 14 พฤษภาคม 2565

วันที่แก้ไขบทความ (Revised) : 20 มิถุนายน 2565

วันที่ตอบรับบทความ (Accepted) : 20 มิถุนายน 2565

Abstract

The objectives of this research are to study the patterns of conservation of Buddhist traditions and practices of monks of Wat Pa (the forest temple) and to study the effects of the monks' behavior on the quality of life of the people living in the communities surrounding Wat Pa. It is a qualitative research based on a documentary and fieldwork study. The basic data was collected by studying circumstances, the way of life of monks, duties of monks, principles of conduct, student's duty towards a teacher, student's duty towards a preceptor, including important daily monastic observances as practiced in various temples that give importance to the meditation practice, and the effects of the monks' behavior on the quality of life of the people living in the communities surrounding Wat Pa through the researchers' observation. Other methods of data collection were also adopted such as an in-depth interview with the main information providers and focus group discussion. Data analysis was to summarize, interpret, and then present in a descriptive form.

The results of the research revealed that the monks of Wat Pa strictly adhered to the discipline of the Sangha with their practice inherited from the teachers. The practice of any of Thirteenfold Austere Practice (*Dhutanga*) was at individual monk's choice to seriously refine his own mind from defilements. The practice of monastic observances in accordance with the inherited patterns based on the intrinsic nature of a person (*Carita*) of the individual monk led

him to find out the absolute truth. The effects of the monks' behavior on the quality of life of the people were divided into three aspects, namely physical aspects in terms of good, strong, refreshed physical health because of performing a routine; mental aspects in terms of mental health with a bright, pure, delighted mind because of the joy of having a role model for peace and happiness and also staying in control of one own emotion when in more developed practice; intellectual aspect in terms of clear intelligence, clear vision of problems, and immediate solution to problems. With the depth of wisdom, one can see the conventional truth and eventually the ultimate truth.

Keywords: life of monks, forest temple, monastic observances, quality of life

1. Introduction

The monks in Buddhism can be divided into two groups, namely *Ganthadhura* and *Vipassanādhura*. The former takes the burden of studying the Scriptures of the Buddha's teachings to increase the knowledge of the Buddha's teachings for the purpose of practice by themselves and later teaching others. The monks of this group, after studying, will come up with wisdom called *Sutamayapaññā*. It is wisdom that comes from learning from outside by listening, seeing, etc. Most of the *Ganthadhura* monks live usually in a temple located in a town or village for the convenience of acquiring knowledge for oneself from various knowledge sources and easily using that knowledge to teach others often as much as possible. Therefore, they are also called *Gāmavāsī* monks or monks who live in a village.

The latter, *Vipassanādhura*, mainly takes the burden of bringing the Buddha's teachings to practice strictly and seriously with an emphasis on mental training as the task of meditation practice in order to achieve wisdom in the form of *Bhāvanāmayapaññā* (wisdom resulting from mental development) which is the true knowledge according to the principles of Buddhism. It is the wisdom that arises from within automatically after practicing right concentration (*Sammāsamādhi*) until a certain level of the fourth absorption (*Catutthajjhāna*) leading to the Threefold Knowledge which is a certain real level of knowledge according to the ability of the individual practitioner through the wise consideration which eventually will lead to liberation from the cycle of rebirth which is the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

The practice to achieve this result needs to find peaceful and tranquil place far from outside interference in various forms. Therefore, the *Vipassanādhura* monks went out into the forest seeking a beneficial place for themselves to carry out the task of meditation practice effectively. Therefore, they are also called *Arañhavāsī* monks or monks who live in the forest

or Austere Monks. Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto has been called the Master of the Army of Wat Pa. He was famous and well-known worldwide. Because he is regarded as the Patriarch of the *Vipassanā* Meditation of Thailand. It is the result of his commitment to studying and practicing earnestly until he has experienced Dhamma or the absolute truth for himself. Usually, he lives in the forest until he was called the *Araṅḡavāsī* Monk or the Austere Monk. Although he has passed away for more than 6 decades already, his teachings, including the honorable stories of wandering along mountains and forests as a part of the Austere Practice and the propagation of Buddhism in various places, remain in memory and build up the faith among Buddhists endlessly. UNESCO has honored Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto on his occasion of 150th birthday anniversary in 2020 as the world's key figure of the year 2020-2021. He is the third noble monk of Thailand to be honored after *Somdet Phra Maha Samanajao Krom Phra Poramanuchit Chinorot* and the *Buddhadasa Bhikkhu*. Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto was one of the great Vipassana Teachers of Thailand who carried out strictly and seriously the practice of contentment or satisfaction with whatever is one's own, simplicity, and seclusion with application of exertion from the first day of his ordination until the end of his life. Therefore, it is proper to call him a monk of completion and perfection. Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto is a Buddhist meditation practitioner that Thai Buddhists respect. His name was spoken of both while he was alive and after he died because he was a leader in the restoration of Buddhism of Thailand to prosper again during the half period of the Buddhist Era. Later, after the death of Luang Pu Mun (1949, Phra Dhammacedi (Jum Panthulo), Wat Phothisomphon, Udon Thani Province, at that time, as an Ecclesiastical Regional Governor and a senior disciple of Luang Pu Mun realized the importance of the place where Luang Pu mun had lived in for 5 consecutive years and then renamed the place as "Wat Bhuridat Thirawat" to honor him in accordance with the auspicious name of Luang Pu Mun since then.

Therefore, it is appropriate and important to study a good role model from a good template to decode and apply it as proper as possible. A study of practice patterns of the monks of good and proper conduct in Wat Nong Pa Phong, Warin Chamrap District, Ubon Ratchathani Province and the integration of their practice principles and the practice of Somdet Phra Bhuddhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto) are regarded as the best conservation of the excellent traditions to last a long time. In terms of performing the duties of the monks of good conduct, there is the participation of the people who live in the area surrounding the temple. It is a strong participation in the succession of Buddhism and the preservation of their own good culture and plays the important role in stabilizing Buddhism in Thailand. Of these all

issues, the research team raised some useful issues regarding the practice of Wat Pa monks and the good traditions that the Buddha has taught the monks who are extremely in need of removal of defilements to practice or train themselves intensely, which are all a good model that Thai monks in the forest temple have followed. Firstly, when seeing the Wat Pa monks practicing their monastic observances in terms of the duty towards a teacher, good conduct, and good discipline as a result of their continuously refined mind for a long time trained by their great spiritual teachers such as Luang Pu Mun, Luang Por Cha, who currently have many students both in Thailand and abroad, some people with no clear understanding thought that the Wat Pa monks were ogres, black magicians or monks with no learning of Buddhism. The research team realizes the value of the conservation of Buddhist culture by practicing the beautiful and good Buddhist way of practice in this style of Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, it is important to study this good pattern of practice and preserve it as good as possible. Despite the rapid changes in society, Theravada monks and Buddhists were able to stabilize themselves in their own dignity. They are important to each other in the field of practice and in the academic field, because, at present, the practice of the monks of Wat Pa has been applied to provide people with education at the university level, such as Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University, Mahamakutrajavidyalaya Buddhist University, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, Udon Thani Rajabhat University, etc. And more importantly, how the impacts of the monks' lifestyle affect the quality of life of people who live near Wat Pa are an important issue that the research team will study further.

2. Research Objectives

1. to study the patterns of conservation of Buddhist traditions and practices of monks of Wat Pa (the forest temple).
2. to study the effects of the monks' behavior on the quality of life of the people living in the communities surrounding Wat Pa.

3. Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research. Its research process is divided into 3 steps: 1) a study of basic information condition regarding the practice of good conduct, monastic observances, and the Austere Practice which is a strict practice for monks of Wat Pa who are practitioners of removing defilements for liberation was the basic knowledge body in this research; 2) a general observations, a photographing of the practice of monks of Wat Pa, and in-depth interview with

the abbot of a temple or a temple representative assigned by the abbot were done to build a knowledge body on the way of life and behavior of monks of Wat Pa; 3) an analysis of the effects of the monks' behavior on the quality of life of the people living in the communities surrounding Wat Pa was also done. Once the guidelines were obtained, brainstorming those involved was conducted to establish appropriate behavioral styles for the general public based on the applied principles or approaches taken from the body of knowledge on the conduct of monks of Wat Pa taken as a guideline on the conduct of the group of people or communities that train themselves according to the teachings of Wat Pa monks, and then an evaluation of the effectiveness resulting as the quality of life of the people after following the curriculum was carried out with the details as follows: 1) a study of documents and researches related to the research, logical analysis and synthesis, and summary were conducted as a guideline for the next step of research, 2) non-participatory observation of the practice of the monks was conducted during their practice in the temple, 3) an interviews with a semi-structured interview approach was conducted to make the research as natural as possible based on the interviewing guidelines according to the research objectives, 4) the organization of a group discussion between the meditation practitioners in the temple was conducted to develop guidelines for improving the quality of life of the people in various aspects as appropriate for each culture and local to achieve research integrity.

4. Research Findings

1. Monks and novices are forbidden to ask for things from people who are not relatives with no invitation and to contact with the householder and priest who is opposite to Buddhism.

2. Do not tell and learn the brute, the numbers, do not make holy water, do not be the doctor, the fortune teller, do not make and distribute various sacred objects.

3. A monk in monkhood less than 5 years should not wander alone unless there is a necessity or a proper teacher who should follow along.

4. Before doing things, monks should consult with the Order or the chief monk first, when monks saw that it is suitable for the Doctrine and the Discipline, do it, do not follow one's own power.

5. Joy in the dwelling provided by the Order, clean up the cubicle and the entrance.

6. When the activities of monks take place, carry them out together and stop doing them at the same time, do not make oneself disgusted by the group, i.e., being the illusionist and treachery, avoiding duty, and excuses.

7. During eating, keeping alms bowl, washing alms bowl, sweeping temple courtyard, taking water, taking bath, preparing dining hall, drying clothes, listening to the sermons, do not talk. Be really determined to do those activities.

8. After eating, help each clean up the dining hall, and then bow to the Buddha's image at the same time and bring one's own requisite back to the dwelling in peace.

9. Make oneself a modest person to talk, eat, and sleep, be cheerful, be the one who awakens with persistence, and help each other nurse monks and novices who are ill with mercy.

10. Do not accept money and gold, and do not ask others to keep it for oneself, do not trade.

11. When gain happened in this group of monks, keep it as a communal gain. When any monk is in need, the Order shall give a proper portion to him.

12. Do not talk in group at day and night in general places, or in a cubicle unless it is necessary to talk. Nonetheless, do not be mingled and hilarious. Do not smoke, do not eat betel nuts.

13. Receiving and sending letters, documents, or various objects outside the room are to inform the Order, or chief monk for permission every time. When the Order or the chief monk agrees with, then do it.

14. Monks and novices who intend to practice in the school, initially, have to obtain a deposit letter from their preceptor or teacher, and then transfer the residence in the monk or novice identity book from the previous school to the current school.

15. Monk or novice who is a guest, but wants to stay overnight, must show the monk or novice identity book to the Order or the chief monk since the first night. He can be scheduled to stay a maximum of 3 nights unless there is a necessity.

The 14 duties are traditional principles of practices in the society of monks to support the practice of monastic observances to go well and neatly. They are as follows:

1. *Āgantukavatta*: the duties of the visitors who enter other temples.
2. *Āvāsikavatta*: the duties of the abbot (local monk) to perform towards the visitors.
3. *Gamikavatta*: the duties of those who prepare to go elsewhere.
4. *Anumodanāvatta*: thank-giving is allowed in dining place.
5. *Bhattaggavatta*: the traditions in dining hall or when eating at home.
6. *Pindacārikavatta*: the regulations at the time of going for alms, follow the code of etiquette.

7. *Araññikavatta*: the regulations of those who dwell in the forest.
8. *Senāsanavatta*: the method to maintain the residence is to keep cleaning always.
9. *Jantāgharavatta*: the rules in the firehall for warming the body and healing disease.
10. *Veccakudivatta*: rules and regulations when going to the toilet.
11. *Upajjāyavatta*: the regulations of student towards the preceptor.
12. *Satthivihārikavatta*: the duties for the preceptor to do towards his student.
13. *Ācariyavatta*: the regulations of student towards his teacher.
14. *Antevāsikavatta*: the regulations towards student.

Daily routine is for the right practice which goes well to remove the defilements and to create a good character. Wat Nong Pa Phong, therefore, sets a daily routine as follows

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| 03.00 | gathering at the hall, practicing of sitting meditation, morning chanting. |
| 05.00 | cleaning the dining hall, preparing the seats, going for alms food. |
| 08.00 | receiving alms food, eating food. |
| 10:00 | cleaning the dining hall, listening to admonition, bowing to the Buddha's image, returning to one own cubical, application of exertion by walking meditation and sitting meditation. . |
| 14.00 | doing public activities with each other, such as cleaning the pavilion, the consecrated assembly hall, the temple courtyard, the road, renovating and repairing various sites. |
| 16.00 | drinking beverage, taking a bath, walking meditation. |
| 18.00 | Sitting Meditation, evening chanting, listening to the Dharma and Vinaya. |

The practices or rules are set as the path leading to Nirvana. Anyone who has already violated the rules is not a monk, not a person who intends to practice. He would not see anything, even if he was with the Master every night and day, he could not see the Master. Even if he was with the Buddha, he could not see the Buddha.

The Thirteenfold Austere Practice (13 *Thutangas*) is the practice for removing or eliminating defilement. It is the practice that is difficult for a person to carry out. It is for the removing of defilements in extreme level.

5. Effects on the Quality of Life of the People

Direct quality of life: Somdet Phra Yan Vajirodom (Luan Poh Viriyang Sirintharo) recounted his experience of wandering as a part of the austere practice with Luang Pu Mun privately that it was his merit that Luang Pu Mun chose him to go wandering alone. Even though other teachers would ask to go too, Luang Pu Mun would not let them go. As soon as he reached the forest near the village, reverend Somdet had asked for permission to go on a personal business. Luang Pu Mun followed with his mind. When he returned, Luang Pu Mun accused him of why he did not bring the water to wash. He was accused of the violation of the discipline. Reverend Somdet replied that water was scarce. This discipline should be tolerated. Luang Pu Mun said that the discipline cannot be tolerated regardless of the places. And Luang Pu Mun also remarked on the environment that the villagers here made a good living. Because the stubble of rice was high. It proved that the water was good leading to the effective cultivation. This remark represents a vision of a teacher who does not look only at training disciples, but also at the people seeking to help in all aspects. For the laymen, Luang Pu Mun taught them to follow the proper way, namely donation, observance of the precepts, practice of meditation in accordance with the proper times. For Luang Por Cha Subhaddo's practice, it was a practice that even the monks in practice praised him that he was the most serious practitioner. For example, his story was narrated in the book "Under the Bhodhiyan Shadow" that one day he went wandering and reached one temple where Luang Ta (the old aged monk) lived in alone. Luang Ta told him that he had no greed, hatred, and delusion. Later Luang Ta's claim had been proved wrong. One day, a cow of the villager came to graze in the temple, Luang Ta took the timber to hit the cow to chase it away. Lung Por Cha, after seeing so, thought that "Oh! What happened to monk who had no greed, hatred, and delusion". One day, there was a layman taking some sticks of bamboo or Khao Lam to the temple, burning them near the cubicle, and having gone somewhere. They started to burn. Luang Ta looked for the layman left and right, but could not see anyone, and then, held and flipped them himself. This action was regarded as the violation of the religious law of monks. At the time of food, Luang Por Cha received it, but did not eat it, because it was not pure. One day, Lung Por Cha and Luang Ta went to find firewood in the forest. Lung Por Cha saw the firewood with a mark on it, so he did not take it. When seeing this, Luang Ta asked him that why he did not take that firewood. He replied that he saw a mark on it, that meant there might be the owner. So, he decided not to take it because of being afraid of violation of the religious law of monks. Since then, Luang Ta who used to have a routine towards the guest (Routine for arrivals)

regardless of how many years of his monkhood sat in line before novices, did not sit according to the monkhood age, and did not allow to accept gifts from laypeople, had the lesson learnt and followed accordingly. One more thing, Luang Por Cha told that when he was in a monkhood for more than ten years, he went to one temple where many Luang Tas (many old aged monks) dwelled in, but he did not mind anything. When the time of duties came, he carried a bucket of water to fulfill the water jar and chopped wood to boil a jackfruit core for dyeing the robes without consideration of his monkhood age. It was comfortable for him, because he did not mean to do things for anybody, but for the sake of the monastic observance. Another person is Father Nu who had been a shaman before. later Luang Por Cha tortured him and turned him back from the wrong view to hold the Triple Gem.

The way of life of people living around the temple in physical aspect was a dimension that caused physical energy. They had the strength to make a livelihood, because there was a monk as a golden umbrella helping them know how to make the right livelihood. Things that will be offered to the monks must be pure or without poisoning. (Interview with the attendant of Wat Pa Phurithattathirawat). On the body of people living near the temple, there were activities in the temple, enabling them to practice meditation together or doing sweeping activities in the temple. Most of them were charitable events, such as the event of making merit for various festivals and the study of various meditation courses of Luang Por Viriyang (Interview with monks of Wat Thammamongkol and students of the Vidantasa Meditation course). The mental aspect had the most profound effect. Many people had found peace of mind. For example, Mae Chan Dee, the sister of Luang Ta Maha Bua, a nun Kaew Sianglum, a student of Luang Pu Mun, who had realized the noble Dharma or the Absolute Truth. Luang Pu Mun's teaching focused on benefits at present, such as livelihood, donation, observance of precepts, and meditation. Luang Ta Thongkham said that Luang Pu Mun taught Colonel Nim Chayodom to practice until having the Eye of Truth (Luang Ta Thongkam Charuvanno). Luang Pu Cham taught Father Month until having the bright mind (History of Luang Pu Cham). The story of Father Month and Col. Nim shew that although they were just lay disciples, they achieved the high level of the Truth. It is noteworthy that nowadays there are many spiritual teachers, the transportation is also convenient, and there are many people who have been accepted as disciples, but those who are serious practitioners of meditation like Father Month and Col. Nim are very few. The effects on public life or group of people were found that the people continued to live in the group with ideas about how to help each other, how to treat each other as a family, and how to support each other. The older ones supported the younger

ones with their opinions and ideas, while the younger ones worked in different areas of labor work, but the community near the temple emphasized unity following the model performed by the monks who lived together with almost a hundred in number, but they kept quiet as if there was no one living in a temple. When doing activities such as sweeping the courtyard, rubbing the dwelling, performing duties, chanting, and listening to the Dharma, the monks were full of temples. The villagers were also like that (Interviews with merit-making people of Ban Nong Phue Na Nai). There were many types of people entering the temple. People who came to practice relied on the temple to seek the peace of both body and mind. They had enough time to practice as good as possible, because they were off from the livelihood activities, stopped secular activities, and focused on staying at the temple for 2-3 days, or longer courses for 7-9 days in order to allow the mind to absorb the flavor of peace both from the temple, i.e., the practice of the monks and from the sermons to train the practitioners of meditation (focus-group discussion with teachers of Vitdantadasamadhi). Moreover, seeing the Buddhist monk is the highest auspiciousness. This led the researcher team to recall the calm symptoms of Assaji Bhikkhu who made Kolita Paribbajaka stop and think that this recluse must have the inner unusual virtue for sure. The researcher is a student of a meditation course of Somdet Phra Yan Vajirodom, Phra Ajahn Luang Por Viriyang, and studied the satipatthana course at Wat Mahathat. Therefore, the researcher saw the value of helping the world according to the model that the teachers have practiced. On various environmental aspects, when monks treated the environment well, people who entered the temple had an understanding and were glad that the monks treated the environment with an emphasis on understanding nature and without destruction. People around the temple obeyed to follow, i.e., collecting produce for sale in front of the temple to facilitate the temple visitors for both practice and sightseeing according to the different condition of the temple (observations of researchers). The beliefs of the people: they believed that treating the monks according to the Thai style will receive merit, which is to be happy, and continue to collect merit until the realization of the Truth or Nirvana (interviewing people wearing white robes who practice Dharma in Wat Pa Salwan).

6. Research Discussion

The way of life and behavior of monks in the forest temple were influenced by the succession of the teacher to the disciple following the principles of Theravada, strictly. For the Thirteenfold Austere Practice, some temples carried out only 12, some temples 14. They differed in accordance with the traditional monastic observances of each temple, but in

summary, they were similar. Its difference was due to geographical condition. They were also in accordance with Muttotthai, the teachings of Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto (compiled by Somdet Phra Yan Wwajirodom, Phra Ajarn Luang Por Viriyang Sirintharo) and with the teachings of Phra Bhothi Yan Thera (Luang Por Cha Subhaddo) in Upalmanee Book compiled by the group of disciples in 1992. As for the impact on society, the results on people's physical, mental, and intellectual aspects were consistent with Prachuap Saen Klang's thesis (Prachuap Saen Klang, 1988), which studied the roles and effects of the monks of the *Vipassanādhura* of Phra Ajarn Mun Bhuritto on North Isan society during the year 1893-2529 as well as studying the concept of practice guidelines, and the teachings of monks in this group. The research population was divided into 3 groups, namely a group of Wat Pa Ban Tat, Muang District, Udon Thani Province, a group of Wat Chetayakhrivihan (Wat Phu Thok), Bueng Kan District, Nong Khai Province, and a group of Wat Pa Udom Somporn, Phanna Nikhom District, Sakon Nakhon Province. The researcher team has studied the group of monks, the group of villagers, and the group of general people. As for the group of monk students, the study was carried out with the 3 abbots including their close disciples of monks and lay people. As for the group of lay students, the study was carried out with the villagers from 3 groups of villages locating close to the temples. Only two villages from each group were selected as the research population, and there were 6 selected villages in total. The data, when obtained, were analyzed and the research results were presented in descriptive form.

The results of the research were as follows: Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto and his monk disciples belong to Dhammayutikanikaya Sect emphasizing on the meditation practice. They were separated from the administration group (*Gāṃavāsī*) with Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto as the leader. Before separating themselves as the monks of the meditation practice, in the early day of Dhammayutikanikaya Sect in Isaan since the 1st era, which was the era of Phra Ajarn Dee (Dee Banthulo) (around 1856), there were the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation in parallel with education, administration, and teaching. In the 4th period which was the era of Somdet Phra Maha Virawong (Aun Tisso) (1923-1927), there was the separation between the administration group and the *Vipassanā* meditation group. The monks of *Vipassanā* meditation group were wandering along mountains far away from the community to practice *Vipassanā* meditation. Therefore, they were called in different names as *Araññvāsī* Monks (Phra Pa), *Vipassanā* Meditation Monks, Meditation Monks. The monks of this group had ideas, practices, and teachings that contributed greatly to the practice of meditation until realization of the Absolute Truth or the highest goals of Buddhism by strictly following these 13 Austere Practices. For example, eating

only one meal, practice of meditation in a secluded forest far away from people, eating food in alms bowl, going for alms food. As for the rules, practices, and traditions of monks in this line, they are all a good role model according to the status of the Buddhist monks who practiced for true liberation or Nirvana or Arahantahood. There are two main roles for this kind of monks, namely the dissemination of Buddhism and teaching people, novices, and monks. And the secondary role is to help people in rural Isan communities. The first role of this kind of monk has been done quite a lot. This is because their habits and practices emphasize the meditation practice along the mountain and forest. They do not like to stay at the temple or somewhere for a long time, or in a large group, but they disperse to travel, train, and teach the people along with the practice of meditation. As for the secondary role, this group of monks has helped the villagers according to their status and circumstances that are not contrary to the Doctrine and the Discipline. It is noteworthy that this material aid was focused only on the basic factors of living of the people. For example, building schools, hospitals, roads, reservoirs, agriculture, etc. Besides, some monks have played an important role in setting up communities (villages) and taking part in solving the situation of the country for the sake of peace and happiness. As for the behavior of monks that affects society, it is consistent with the work entitled Teachings and Patterns of Meditation Practice of Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto (Phatchawat Suksen, Banpot Kathaisong, & friends, 2020: 60) which stated that they influence Thai society in 2 major areas: the arear of Sangha and the arear of general Buddhists. As for the arear of Sangha, in the early stages that Luang Pu Mun began practicing vipassana meditation and wandering for the reclused places as the part of the Austere Practice, he was opposed and misunderstood. The practice of vipassana meditation according to Luang Pu Mun's approach was something new and unfamiliar to all monks and novices in that period. But with the determination to practice in accordance with the Buddha's teachings without paying attention to the false eyes and accusations of those who do not know and understand, Luang Pu Mun was able to pass through various obstacles eventually, and later his practice was widely accepted and popular among monks and novices. Until now, it has spread to many countries. As for the arear of the general Buddhists, it was found that in the early stages of Luang Pu Mun's meditation practice, the appearances of the meditation monks were strange, scary, and suspicious to ordinary people. This is because the gestures of the meditation monks are different from ordinary monks and novices. Their robes were colored gray or dull brown which monks and novices generally do not wear. They have solemn mannerisms and rarely to mingle with villagers. They eat food in the alms bowl, eat only one meal a day, and prefer to dwell

in a quiet place, such as in the forest, in the cemetery, where the common people do not dwell. When traveling, their one-shoulder carries a long-handled umbrella which is like umbrella that is larger than the ordinary umbrella. In the early stages, the villagers still did not understand the meditation monks and looked at them with a bad feeling. But when they had the opportunity to observe the practice of the meditation monks and the opportunity to get acquainted with them, they had more understanding and interested in the practice more and more, and later the practice of meditation became popular among people. After Luang Pu Mun died, his reputation and honor were evident, and his teachings and practices had greatly influenced both Thai and foreign Buddhists. Recently, he was regarded by UNESCO as an important person in the world for Peace Branch. The research results were also in accordance with the research of Suchao Ploychum (2006) entitled Vipassana Meditation School Affiliated to Luang Pu Mun phurittato. It found that Luang Pu Mun is the 3rd generation disciple after His Majesty the King Rama IV during His monkhood. Luang Pu Mun is well versed in vipassana meditation, both in the scriptures and in practice, he was also revered and praised by monks and novices who were his disciples as the Headmaster. His disciples are from both Dhammayutikanikaya Sect and Mahanikaya Sect. His students from both sects adhere strictly to the teachings and practices of the Master. They follow the Doctrine and the Discipline strictly, carry out the Austere Practice and meditation practice seriously, and perform the monastic observances regularly. Moreover, they are highly regarded by the Buddhist assembly as the same. This is the reason for the occurrence of temples or schools of vipassana meditation affiliated to Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto from both Dhammayutikanikaya Sect and Mahanikaya Sect in all over the part of Thailand. The influence of the teachings of monks of the forest temple on the quality of life of the people was consistent with the research of Banpot Kathaisong and Phra Mahaphirat Korn Amsumalee entitled A Study of Ethical Analysis in the Meditation of Luang Pu Mun Phuridatto. The research found that it helps Buddhists understand the correct attitude towards meditation monks. It also enables the general Buddhists, both the monk and the householder, to correctly understand the practice of vipassana meditation according to Buddhism. It is the useful practice and the great inspiration for the monks to realize their duty and turn them to focus on the practice of vipassana meditation rather than on the scriptures alone.

7. New Findings from Research

From the research, the research team found the following research findings: the way of life of Wat Pa monks and the practice patterns of monks of Wat Pa monks in the year 1857-

1987 was still a traditional way of studying. They had to study and stay with teachers for the first 5 years. After practicing with the teacher to understand all the monastic observances or routines until becoming the mastery of the monks' life taught by their teacher according to the Theravada principles, they are qualified to follow the forest practice privately to receive the result of the mental seclusion arising from the bodily seclusion for the best result of the essentials of existence, i.e. *Nibbāna*. As for the effects of the way of life and the practice of the monks of Wat Pa Monk on the quality of life of the people, the results were summarized in two aspects: physical and mental. In physical effects, people have calm, cool, and happy minds. They can regulate various emotions quickly and stay healthy because of their exercises on walking meditation, sitting meditation regularly. They live on the Right Livelihood in accordance with the noble path. As for the mental aspect, it is a direct impact that makes people's minds brighter and full of cheerfulness. Their minds can concentrate faster. It enables them to understand the nature of things more and more. As for the intellectual aspect, people can understand life and know things better. These are the results of the practice of meditation according to the teachings of the teacher based on morality, concentration, and wisdom.

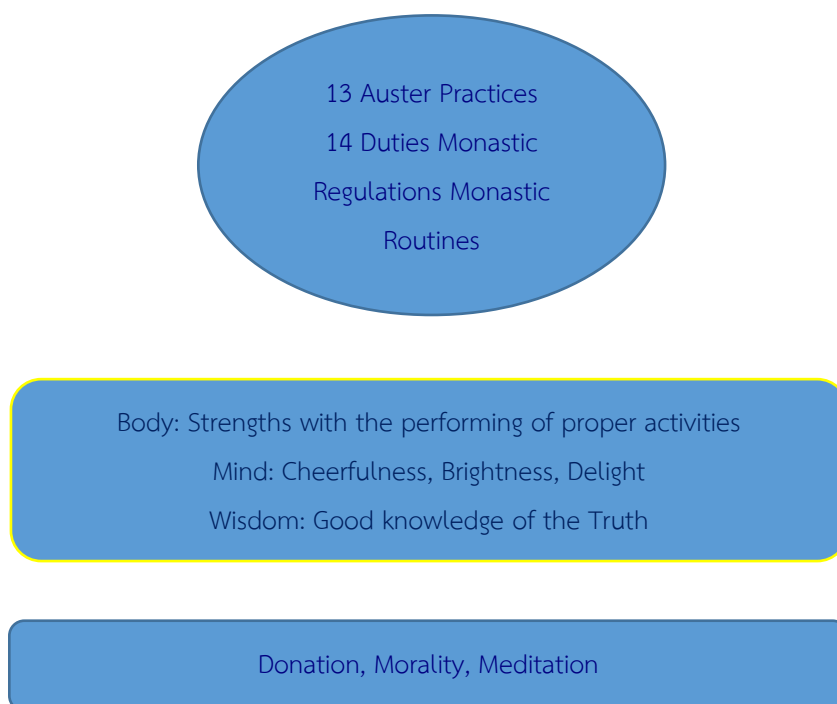


Figure 1: shows the new knowledge found from research.

8. Suggestion

Suggestions from research: from research study, the research team proposed a study of the practice based on Theravada Buddhism, which is considered a model for keeping the Doctrine and the Discipline intensely. It is a process pattern beginning with the process of selecting people to develop themselves as the Buddhists, the process of self-training of the Buddhists, and the process of the application of extreme exertion for the utmost purity. It is noteworthy that the pattern of practice, the 13 Austere Practices, Duties towards Teachers, Duties towards Preceptors, Appropriate Monastic Observances for Monkhood, which is the approach of the forest temple is one of the practice models to stabilize Buddhism firmly. As for the value of the way of life of monks of Wat Pa that contributes to the quality of life of the people in terms of physical, mental, and intellectual quality, it is noteworthy that the way of life of monks of Wat Pa was regarded as a good model that affects the quality of life of the people, helping people have good physical health and good mental health with cheerfulness, brightness, and delight and also helping people have faith in the Triple Gem. They also have intellectual health that leads them to have clear understanding of things and an entertainment of the truth and make them ready to apply Dharma into practice after listening to the Dharma.

Suggestions for further research: in conducting further research, there should be participatory fieldwork of the researcher himself to gain a taste of the dharma from the practice and to enhance wisdom in terms of *Sutamayapaññā*, *Cintāmayapaññā*, and *Bhāvanāmayapaññā* from the teachers of Wat Pa for the sake of the realization of the Absolute Truth or Enlightenment. Furthermore, this study was only of the forest temples (Wat Pa) in Thailand. In fact, there are many forest temples that have their branches located in the foreign countries, namely the forest temples affiliated to Lung Pu Mun Bhuridatto, the forest temples affiliated to Lung Por Cha Subhaddo, and the forest temples affiliated to Luang Por Viriyang Sirintharo. These forest temples provide people with their vipassana meditation courses. Therefore, research on these three schools of vipassana meditation located in the foreign countries should be conducted for the sake of the preservation of the forest temples' practice guidelines and for studying their impact on the international community to prove the universal or timeless results of the Buddha's teachings.

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