

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT TO PREVENT THAI SOCIAL CONFLICT.

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ABSTRACT

Thailand is one of the countries which have a long period of history in the world. It has prominence in its culture that can be traced back from the past to the present, which is consisted of archeological site reflecting the growth and prosperity of Buddhism as the main religion which plays an important role to people in the country. Thailand is consisted of various ethnic groups, and each group has its own history and interesting culture. Even though, Thailand has many ethnic groups and tribes, but Thai people maintains living together with peace. This reflects that Thailand has good social management from the past to the present, which makes Thai society live together with harmony and unity. It can be said that the factor which plays an important role in social management from the past to the present is Buddhism. Buddhism is the spiritual anchor, which unites Thai people to be a harmonized society; and this can be seen from various cultural heritages. For the above reasons, Thailand has been accepted as the city of the yellow robe of Buddhism.

Keyword: Thailand, Social Management, and Buddhism,

INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a country which has a long historical period and its prominent culture which can be traced back from the past to the present in terms of architecture, sculpture, art, good culture and custom, and archeological site which reflect the prosperity of Buddhism, which is the religion that plays an important role to Thai people.

Thailand has various tribes of people, which each ethnic group has its own interesting history. Even though, Thailand is consisted of various ethnic groups, but they can live together with peace. This is because Thailand has a good social management from the past to the present, which reflects its own identity.

The factor that plays an important role in management of Thai society from the past to the present is Buddhism, which becomes the spiritual anchor of all Thai people. Therefore, Thailand has been appraised as the city of Buddhism. The norms and customs of Thai people present the concordance in living together with peace and happiness under social management based on Buddhism.

Currently, Thailand opens itself to accept civilization and advancement from outside in various aspects. Such civilization and advancement inevitably have an impact on Thailand and Thai society, both in positive and negative way. When society is more advanced, there will be conflict. Thus, there should be an implementation of Buddhist teachings in Thai society to be the direction for preventing social conflict in parallel with creating sustainable growth and development

THE CAUSES OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN THAI SOCIETY

Currently, Thailand is a country that is rapidly growing and a number of populations are also increased. In each section of Thai society, there is a conflict, which should be considered as simple problem of people living together. However, Thailand can find the ways to solve conflict problem within the existing mechanic frame, and Thai society can keep living together with peace.

Whenever, if social conflict has reached the point that cannot be cured, society will have only two alternatives: Trying to solve conflict with peaceful way with negotiation or compromise, and solving conflict with force or violence, which the result is that one will become the winner, and another will become the loser. The winner will lay down new social rules and regulations for their own benefits. In case that no party becomes the winner, society will be broken and separated into fragments which are not good for the country.

The best way is to create mechanic in solving conflict and improving people to live together with peace for the benefits of each other. Therefore, each party should try to avoid conflict by setting agreement that is accepted by each party, for example, agreement that is based on Buddhist teachings: Morality, meditation, and wisdom (Phra Dhammagosacharn, 2010: 34). Social regulations for creating good relationship as well as reserving norms and customs should be created, and land property and other resources of the community should be allocated for equal benefits of the people.

Buddhism is believed to be “the religion of peace”. This is because “Buddhism accepts that conflict is the nature of humanity and society” (Phramaha Hansa Dhammaso, 2005: 87), and Buddhism also has a positive attitude that “Conflict is the nature of humanity and cannot be avoided.”

Religion and culture have been used as the tools to manage society to live together with peace so that people in the society can transcend the state of nature with the use of force and violence to the use of the state of religion and culture. Therefore, Thai society can live together with peace and harmony. If there is any conflict, Thai society has mechanic in solving conflict based on the principles of religion and culture.

Most importantly, the condition which can be used to solve social conflict must be fair and accepted by each member in the society. Whenever, people in the society cannot accept that condition, it cannot be used to solve conflict problem anymore. In such situation, people in the same society will neglect the state of religion and culture and turn to use the state of nature with force and violence instead. The results are that there will be loss of life, injury, and loss of belongings and properties. When using force and violence to solve problem, the problem is temporarily ceased and will erupt later, which will worsen the situation than it usually happened.

PHENOMENA OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN THAI SOCIETY

From a study of conflict, it was found that conflict has caused from: Changing values and norms, which means society in the past has a unity, but when time came, society cannot maintain its originality of unity and harmony (Likit Therawekin, 2009: 59-62). The causes of conflict can be presented as follows:

1. Conflict in Thai Society occurs from different values and norms of different generations

Old and new generations always have different values and norms. Such differences lead to conflict, and disharmony between these two generations. Each society cannot avoid this kind of conflict; conflict is presented in terms of behavior, attire, food and courtesy. This conflict cannot be avoided; it appeared from the past to the present.

2. Conflict in Thai Society Occurs from Social Change

Thai society used to be agricultural society. When it is developed to be a prominent country for Buddhist and cultural tourism, there are many people from around the world coming to visit. That incident leads to social differences: rural society which is an agricultural, and urban society which is part of tourism and industry. Such incident leads to important change such as a variety of culture and adherence to new culture that is different from the past. Thus, people in tourism sector have different culture from people of agricultural sector, which remain the old norms and traditions.

3. Conflict in Thai Society Occurs from the Inflow of Foreign Culture and Civilization

Propagation of other religious belief and new concept in governance and administration of foreigners, and bringing inventions such as new sciences and technologies to develop the country have an impact on Thai society. At the same time, it leads to create new conflicts such as conflict occurring from building mosque in some regions of Thailand and problem causing from game addiction of children, and so on. The inflow of other religions and technologies, not only threatens Thai society, but also has an impact on the stability of the country.

AN INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BASED ON BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

According to Buddhism, conflict may help to increase human internal value in subjective way, and plays an important role in developing value in objective way as well. Conflict leads to development of governance system, social development, and economic development. The point is that how we react to conflict or play our roles in conflict situations, and how we can maintain peace at the midst of conflict situations.

As mentioned earlier, “Conflict leads to change.” Change can be in terms of physical and spiritual, macro and micro. Buddhism accepts that each ordinary person has internal conflict which occurs from greed, hatred and delusion. However, the result of conflict can be positive because it leads to finding the way to solve problem and to develop oneself. The Buddha had internal conflict in himself, therefore, he tried to find the way to upgrade his spiritual development until he reached enlightenment. He contemplated on birth, old age, illness, and death and then developed his mind from a simple human being to the “Buddhahood mind” (Phra Dhammapidok, 1996).

Therefore, it can be seen that conflict is considered as the valuable bridge laid down for people to walk through to the free of conflict. In the opinion of ordinary people, conflict leads to self-development. When people have conflict in themselves whether in terms of needs for success, needs for esteem, needs for belongings, and needs for security, they will create motivation for success (Dhamm-chanda) in order to seek for things to respond to their needs.

AN INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BY FORMING THE GROUP OF THAI PEOPLE LOVING THAILAND.

Thai people have cooperated in applying concepts for social management by forming the group of people named “Loving Thai City”, which has a deep meaning towards Thailand as “Thai People Love and Protect Thailand.” This is conducted by using the process of knowledge management as a tool or direction for self-development and connection development, starting from persuading people who have common sense in loving and protecting their land with activities such as forest reservation, river reservation, sufficient agriculture, health treatment of neighbors, taking care of aging people, taking care of HIV

infected persons, prevention of narcotic problem, youth protection, and many other problems. Moreover, praising people who conduct good deed or merit according to the principle of “sympathetic joy or gladness of another’s success”, by appreciating and spreading his or her merit for the sample of other people can be used as a tool to motivate people to do good things, which will have positive impact on Thai society.

AN INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL CONFLICT THROUGH SELF-MANAGEMENT OR SELF-CORRECTION.

In Thailand, each community in various regions has several self-managements such as forest resource management, water management, agricultural management, and narcotic management, which can be proven that people can manage themselves at appropriate level and upgrade their management to higher level at provincial and country level. This leads to more powerful management for self-dependence and helps reduce problems about the basic structure of centralization and unfair distribution of resources. Self-management is a general public operation to strengthen its community and provide opportunity for people to participate in conflict management.

CONCLUSION

Thailand is a country which has a long historical period and various valuable cultures. Thai people are consisted of many different ethnic groups of people. Each group has its own ways of life, norms, traditions, culture, language, and attire. Even though having different backgrounds, Thai people are able to live together with peace. This reflects good social management of Thailand, which leads to create unity and harmony among each group of people. When there is any conflict in the society, Thai people can apply various methods for solving conflict such as the process of learning to have sympathetic joy or gladness for another’s success that is to look for the merit of the others, appreciate the merit of other people and propagate his or her merit to the public at large.

Therefore, it can be seen that social management in Thailand focuses on strengthening organization, community, public and private sector, organizational development, and civil sector by supporting communal and local development, setting up and developing communal organization and its connection in both rural and urban region. In addition, government sector has a policy to support the budget for such activities, which lead to the processes of development of knowledge and investment on social capital to create good social management sustainably throughout Thailand.

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