CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Buddhism and Society

According to Santhorn Promintr in *Getting to Know Buddhism* (1994), Thailand is a strong Buddhist country. His Majesty the King is a devout Buddhist and the Royal Family takes a strong interest in religious affairs. As a result, royal patronage is a significant factor contributing to the stability and progress of Buddhism in Thailand. The appeal of the Lord Buddha's teaching or Dharma to the Thai mentality and the ability of the religion to accommodate and transform the local culture are the most important factors underlying the Thai acceptance of Buddhism. Thus, Buddhism has become so integrated into Thai culture that the two are virtually inseparable. Buddhist influences can be distinguished in Thai lifestyle, mannerisms, traditions, characters, arts, architecture, language, and all other aspects of the Thai culture. Buddhism is also a significant factor in bringing about harmonious development in social values and traditions in the country as a whole.

2.1.1 Buddhist Monks

What Thai people believe in is the Triple Gems: The Lord Buddha, the Dharma and the Monks. The monk is representative of the Buddha in the way that monk is a person who teaches Dharma to the lay people. The Lord Buddha, the Dharma, and the monks are thus interrelated and interdependent. The monk lifestyle is very different from that of the laity. It is designed to be a contributing factor to spiritual practices and suitable for a life of dedication and service. The lifestyle of the monk has to be kept simple. It should be free from family concerns and obligations. Whereas wealth is considered a symbol of success and social status, it is an impediment on the spiritual path for the monk. Monks represent not only spiritual leadership in religious affairs, but also leadership in society. For example, monks are

requested to bless a new house, a new office, and even a new car. Rural villagers often turn to monks to mediate land disputes, family problems, and differences among neighbors. When necessary, monks take the initiative in various social projects such as construction of schools and hospitals, roads and reservoirs, mainly by giving guidance. Because of the trust and confidence people place in monks by virtue of their moral integrity and exemplary conducts, they are looked up to for leadership in certain communal activities, especially in rural areas, where monks and laity enjoy a closer bond and cooperation.

According to Seang Chandra-ngarm in *Buddhism and Thai People* (1999), monks have two kinds of duties which are religious duties and secular duties. Religious duties are to observe the 227 monastic rules laid down by the Buddha himself, to practice meditation, and to develop insight into the three truths of life: imperfectness, impermanence, and impersonality. The secular duties are to teach Buddhist philosophy and morality to the public, to conduct religious rites for people on different occasions, to help in rural development work, and to serve as general consultants to lay members of the temples.

2.1.2 Buddhist Lay People

In *Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman: A Study of Urban Monastic Organization in Central Thailand* (1973), a Buddhist is defined as a person who reveres the Triple Gems of The Lord Buddha, his Dharma and the Monks. A Buddhist layman occasionally observes the Five Precepts of abstinence from the destruction of life, from taking what is not given, from fornication, from speaking falsely, and from spirituous, strong, and maddening liquors which are the cause of sloth. Lay Buddhists are expected to follow these Five Precepts as well as to learn to practice basic meditation.

Moreover, from *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in Northern-east Thailand* (1970), Buddhist laymen should make merit such as offering food to monks or contributing to the construction projects of monasteries. Completely financing the

building of the temple is the act par excellence that brings the most merit. Becoming a monk oneself or having a son become a monk, observing every Holy Day at the temple, and taking part in Buddhist festivals and ceremonies are also considered meritorious acts.

2.1.3 Changes in Buddhist and Life Values

In *Getting to Know Buddhism* (1994), with the rapid increase of modern communications which creates an ever-shrinking world, Buddhism, which originated in the East, finds itself locked in contact with contemporary western culture. With the impact of the western system of development, almost every aspect of Thai life has been influenced by it from the structure and form of government to the system of education, the economic system, commercialism and consumerism, to the arts and entertainment. Amidst these developments, the Thai Buddhism is faced with a new challenge; the traditional sense of Thai people has been changed. Thai people have been alienated from Buddhism.

Examples of the way Thai people have been alienated from Buddhism provided by Nidhi Eowseewong, a well-known Thai social critic concern the weakness of monks as a medium to bring lay people into the Buddhist principles, and the decline of the Buddhist faith among middle class people. From his viewpoint, monks lack the adaptive purpose to teach Dharma to middle class people so that they value the sense of calmness in their mind. This causes middle class people to flee from the temple and turn to various untrustworthy schools of doctrines (qtd. in Wisalo 75). As for lay people, the decline of faith in Buddhism appears in taking the tonsure (*Bued Nak*) ceremony. Formerly, taking the tonsure occurred in the Buddhist lent period, but now it occurs in any time that it is convenient for the "Nak" person and the permission of his boss. From Eowseewong's point of view, although taking the tonsure ceremony costs a lot of money, it is worthy to a man who takes the tonsure because taking the tonsure introduces a man to the Buddhist practices. However, because of the rapid lifestyle in modern society, a man who takes the tonsure stays in the monk status for only a short period, and the purpose of taking the tonsure is

merely to repay his father and mother's kindness, and for gaining respect from people in the society (Eowseewong 61-66).

More examples of the weakness in preserving the disciplines of monks are provided by Sanitsuda Ekachai, in her book, *Keeping the Faith: Thai Buddhism at the Crossroads* (2001). From her view, sexual scandals involving monks are no longer shocking to the Thai public because they are routine of newspaper headlines. The monks' seemingly more widespread violation of the vow to celibacy stems from a variety of factors such as a non-transparent management of temple money which allows monks to accumulate personal wealth, and a total lack of systematic efforts from the clergy to help monks confront sexuality in an increasingly sexual world. One case presented in *Keeping the Faith: Thai Buddhism at the Crossroads* is that of Phra khru Wibulpattanakit, the abbot of Hua Krabue Temple, who owns several old Mercedes Benzes with a plan to turn his personal collection into a museum. The abbot's hobby is unacceptable to the Thai public and the Monks Council because monks cannot own things.

There are similar cases involving monks' sexual scandals. The first case is that of Phra Nikorn Dhammawatee, who was charged with blackmail and extortion against Ornpraweena Bootkhuntong, 23 years old and four months pregnant, in 1990. According to Dr. Suwanna Satha-anand, Assistant Professor in Asian Religions and Philosophy at Chulalongkorn University (qtd. in Ekachai 60), the sexual misconduct of monks is closely linked to the lack of control over the wealth amassed by them. According to the *Vinaya*, monks can not even touch money but Phra Nikorn Dhammawatee could write a cheque for as much as five million baht to pay off what he called blackmail. The second case, in 1995, was Phra Pawana Buddho who was arrested on the charge of raping an under-age hill tribe girl who was studying under his scholarship program. And the last case, in 1998, was Phra Chalermrad Sutijitto who was defrocked for being an exhibitionist and for having sex with nuns at his temple in Kanchanaburi.

An added example of the change of life values among Thai monks concerns the Dhammakaya Temple's spending 30,000 million baht to build a religious monument which looks like a spaceship. Dhammakaya uses marketing strategies to gain money from people. From its efforts to recruit educated youngsters, Dhammakaya dominates most Buddhist clubs in universities. New recruits receive intensive training in religious teaching, foreign languages, and public speaking with a special emphasis on etiquette, hierarchical relationship and seniority. New recruits are salespeople who also receive intensive "Bok Boon" or an offering of merit-making opportunities to the public. All these things are performed in the name of the temple's slogan "Sasom Parami" or accumulation of merit for salvation. According to Dr. Apinya Feungfusakul's research, *Religious Propensity of Urban Communities: A Case Study of Phra Dhammakaya Temple* (qtd. in Ekachai 100), Dhammakaya tries to materialize merit and commercialize Buddhism. The temple uses marketing concepts to turn the concept of merits into concrete consumer products, by offering the faithful the opportunities to buy it.

2.2 Previous Researches

2.2.1 Research on Wimon Sainimnuan's Short Stories and Novels

In Kamol Phoyen's *An Analysis of Pessimism in Wimon Sainimnuan's Short Stories and Novels* (1997), 21 short stories and 6 novels were analyzed in the areas of the writer's attitudes, the background of the attitudes, and the influences of the attitudes upon the readers. From the findings, the attitudes of Wimon Sainimnuan were the pessimistic, by which the writer aimed at reflecting the image of human lives, both in the capital and rural areas faced by difficulties in living because they were exploited by the superiors in terms of status, working position, opportunity, defraud, and exploitation.

A research article *An Analysis of Wimon Sainimnuan's Novels: Khonsongchao and Amata* (2005) by Thamnong Wongphut, analyze the writing techniques and attitudes toward life and society. Individual and social problems result from internal

forces, particularly greed and self-indulgence. In *Konsongchao*, human beings commit acts that create problems for themselves because they allow themselves to follow the base natural force within their own minds. As for *Amata*, it stimulates awareness of merit and inclination toward goodness. The author shows profound understanding of Buddhist principles which recover suffering and transgression, which are mankind's major problems.

2.2.2 Research on the Impacts of Development Through Literature

Panpen Kongkaewjai's *The Impact of Development Towards Familial Relationships as Represented in Selected Thai Short Stories* (2005) examines changes in familial relationships based on social and psychological analysis of the Thai rural population as represented in the selected short stories "Breeding Stock" (1958), "A Drop of Glass" (1975), "What's Gone is Gone" (1977), "The Fifth Train Trip" (1977), "A Grass Cutter" (1978), "A Day in Nhan In's Life" (1979) and "The Responsible" (1970). She demonstrates that Thailand's development plans based on market economy focusing on seeking profits and money play a single role in driving the society. The market economy results in materialism and consumerism in which people struggle to earn money and spend money and capitalists take advantages of the unprivileged in Thai society. Unbalanced development creates changes in familial relationships, including migration in the sense of the youngest leaving home in the village to work in the factories and prostitution trade in Bangkok and other cities. There is also a change in folk wisdom in that the elders no longer have an influence in the decision making of younger generations. In rural society, familial relationship is no longer valued but is replaced by new value of materialism and when individuals perceive the absence of old value among the majority, they feel alienated. In urban society, migrants abound with their duty to show gratitude towards their families in the villages by sending them money.

2.2.3 Research on Changes in Life Values Among Thai Monks

In *The Decline and Change: Thais' Middle Ways of Life* (2006) by Phisit Kotsupho, we see that after adopting the Western style of living since the Fourth Reign of the Chakri Dynasty, Thai people have changed their farming practice from household consumption to production for trade, and have accepted the new social practices such as western clothing and celebrations of Christmas and Valentine's Day. While the temple used to be the community's center, people now lack a sense of human relationships and turn to technology instead. Modern development has a large impact on lifestyles, thoughts, and beliefs of people in the society, and then brings the decline and change in their middle way of life.

Moreover, Thanachai Boonsri (qtd. in Kotsupho 123-132) states that morals and ethics based on Buddhist agriculture which is a unique aspect of Thai people are shaky due to economic development and power of consumerism. Most people increase their greed and selfishness and consider simplicity and sufficiency as backward and foolish. Farmers are in debt because of high investment, pesticides and modern tractors. The tourist business supported by the government's economic project brings to the country the sex trade, drugs and illegal weapons while the Buddhist institution deteriorates. Monks can not save people from suffering anymore. They practice merit-making rituals without understanding its real meaning behind them. This includes the weakening in monk's disciplines, declining in monk's education, turning Buddhism to commerce by selling amulets and setting up ceremony for donation.

According to *A Critical Study of Buddhist Values and the Present Ways of Life of the Buddhists: A Case Study of Mueng District, Ubonratchathani Province* (1990) by Boonnom Moongngam, in the modern society that people live under pressure from rapid and competitive conditions, they have little time for the Buddhist interests. They rarely go to the temple, or make merit. From this research, most people from three different target groups in Mueng District of Ubonratchathani keep Buddhist values

concerning giving alms, preserving Five Precepts, practicing meditation, donating money and materials to the temple, from time to time or only at convenient times.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

2.3.1 Economic Development

Economic Development is a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time. And if the rate of development is greater than the rate of population growth, then per capita real income will increase. "Process" implies the operation of certain forces; these forces operate over a long period and embody changes in certain variables. Particular changes in factor supplies comprise the discovery of additional resources, capital accumulation, population growth, introduction of new and better techniques of production, improvement in skills and other institutional and organizational modifications. Particular changes in the structure of demand for products are associated with developments in size and age composition of population, level and distribution of income, tastes, character of working conditions, and other institutional and organization arrangements. It is possible, therefore, to interpret economic development in terms of specific developments in factor supplies and product demands. However, some people choose to interpret economic development as meaning something more than merely an increase in aggregate output; they believe that it should also denote a rising standard of living (Meier and Balwin 2-4).

Wolt Rostow has identified Five Stages of Economic Development which are traditional society, transitional stage (the preconditions for take-off), take-off stage, drive to maturity stage, and high mass consumption stage. The first stage is to identify characteristics of traditional society that traditional society should be dominated by subsistence activity where output is consumed by producers rather than traded. Any trade is carried out by barter where goods are exchanged directly for other goods. Agriculture is the most important industry and production is labor intensive using only limited quantities of capital. Resource allocation is determined very much by

traditional methods of production. In the second stage, the conditions necessary for industrialization begin to take shape. People become convinced that economic progress is possible and that it will bring them numerous desirable benefits. The next stage is called the take-off stage where rapid growth is achieved through the application of modern industrial techniques in a limited number of sectors of economy as well as the rise of the investment. The fourth stage is the dive to maturity which involves the application of modern technology over the whole range of the economy. And the last stage is the high mass consumption which consumer industries and the service sector become increasingly dominant (Lauer 281-282).

2.3.2 Consumption and Consumerism

According to Jean Baudrillard, consumption is not merely a frenzy of buying a profusion of commodities, a function of enjoyment, an individual function, liberating of needs, fulfilling of the self, affluence, or the consumption objects. Consumption is an order of significations in a "panoply" of signs; a system, or code, of signs; an order of the manipulation of signs; the manipulation of objects as signs; a communication system; a system of exchange; a morality, that is the system of ideological values; a social function; a structural organization; a collective phenomenon; the production of differences; a generalization of the combinatorial processes of fashion; isolating and individualizing; an unconscious constraint on people, both from the sign system and from the socio-economic-political system; and a social logic. For Baudrillard, consumption is a structure that is external to and coercive over individuals. While it can and does take the forms of a structural organization, a collective phenomenon, a morality, it is above all else a coded system of signs. Individuals are coerced into using that system. The use of that system via consumption is an important way in which people communicate with one another. The ideology associated with the system leads people to believe that they are affluent, fulfilled, happy and liberated (15). Consumption can be looked at from the structural perspective, that is what we consume is signs, message, and images rather than commodities. Commodities are no longer defined by their use, but rather by what they signify. And what they signify is defined not by what they do, but by their relationship to the entire system of

commodities, for difference. What people seek in consumption is not so much a particular object as difference and the search for the latter is unending (7).

A consumer society is a modern society in its foundation-laying, industrial phase. The way present-day society shapes its members is dictated first and foremost by the duty to play the role of the consumer. According to Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen, "desire does not desire satisfaction. To the contrary, desire desires desire". To increase their capacity for consumption, consumers must never be allowed to rest. They need to be kept forever awake and on the alert, constantly exposed to new temptations and also in a state of a never wilting excitation (Bauman 79-83).

Consumerism appears to have become part and parcel of the very material of modern life. Areas of social life that were previously free of the demands of the marketplace, including religion, have had to adapt to a world where the needs and desires of the consumer are apparently paramount. Consumerism is ubiquitous and ephemeral. It apparently pervades our everyday lives and structures our everyday experience. Everyday life in the developed world appears, to be dominated by our relationship with consumer goods (qtd. in Miles 1). Consumerism is the cultural expression and manifestation of the apparently ubiquitous act of consumption. The word "consumerism" is often used to refer to a life "excessively preoccupied with consumption" (4). Consumerism is considered as an issue that has a fundamental influence upon the every experience of social life in advanced capitalist society (5).

2.3.3 Modernization and Social Change

Many meanings are given to the terms "modern", "modernising", and "modernisation' in the sociological literature. The first is analytical. "Modernisation" and "Modernising" refer to fairly abstract qualities of social structure and process. Societies are termed "modern" to the extent that they exhibit these qualities, "modernising" to the extent that their elites are successfully attaining these qualities. In other words, "modernisation" is a process of social change, or a set of such processes, which are theoretically universal in time and space. "Modernisation" is

also an attribute of history. Some see it as an increase in social complexity, others as growing mastery of the environment, others again as more specialized adaptation. Modernisation signifies progress; the birth and growth of forces which enrich and strengthen the social fabric. And such forces have been at work throughout history, even if their impact is global and all-pervasive for the first time only in this era (Smith 61).

The second sense of the terms "modern" and "modernisation" is historical. They refer to a particular period in of time, marked off from their predecessors by new characteristics. In that sense, "modernisation" denotes a transition between tradition and modernity. The imagery in this approach is more revolutionary. Emphasis is laid on the violence and discontinuities of "modernisation". Differences in the routes to modernity, the kinds of "modernisation", are accented (62).

The latter is similar to the nineteenth-century concept of the spirit of the age. Once entered, the spirit, the conditions, allow no turning back. For "modernization" is a universal social solvent. Moreover, they sometimes use the term modernisation almost as a synonym for "development" in the sense of engineered social progress. Developing and modernising one's country's resources are similar activities. The only distinction is the one of scope; "modernisation" includes economic development alongside other activities (62).

A number of theorists define modernization in terms of man's increased knowledge and mastery of his environment. For example, Black defines it as the totality of influence of unprecedented increase in man's knowledge of and control over his environment, society, and personality in recent centuries. Eisenstadt emphasizes the cultural and moral aspects of modernization when he characterizes it as the capacity of a social system both to generate change and to absorb the change it produces through rational understanding. In addition, Bellah, Parsons, and Hoselitz believe that in the process of modernization, all societies are subject to the pressures of maturation. Traditional societies, being unable to adapt flexibly to the environment, are sooner or later compelled to slough off their traditional aspects and exchange

these for rational modes of relationship which permit the required adaptation. Modernisation then becomes the process by which a transition from tradition to modernity takes place (63-66).

There are general agreements on the points of conditions of Modernization which are (1) the present system is not immutable but will ultimately give way to a new order, and (2) an altered world system must still be accompanied by change within nations if those nations are to modernize. Moreover, there are two broad types of consequences of Modernization which are structural and socio-psychological changes. Structural change involves five areas: demography, the stratification system, the polity, education, and the family. Socio-psychological changes include two types: changes in values and attitudes and changes that bear upon the well-being of individuals. Modernization is not possible without these kinds of structural and socio-psychological changes. Tradition has been obligated or at least disrupted by the process of modernization, according to many theorists, and that elimination of disruption is inevitable. There are clear differences between the traditional and the modern, but modernization does not demand a shedding of the traditional with each step toward the modern (Lauer 294-309).

Furthermore, under the four processes: an increase in scientific technology, a progressive commercialization of agriculture, the changeover to mechanized factory production, and urbanization, Neil J. Smelser gives the model of modernization through his ideal-type structural change: Differentiation, Reintegration, and Social Disturbance (qtd. in Etzioni 259). Regarding the differentiation of the value system, many traditional attachments must be modified in order to set up more differentiated institutional structures. Because these established commitments and methods of integration are deeply rooted in the organization of traditional society, a very generalized and powerful commitment is required, in the nature of the case, to "pry" individuals from these attachments. Such lines of differentiation form the secularization of religious values. In this process, other institutional spheres - economic, political, scientific, come to be established more nearly on their own. The values governing these spheres are no longer sanctioned directly by religious belief,

but by an autonomous rationality. Insofar, as such rationalities replace religious sanctions in these spheres, secularization occurs (264).

In the process of reintegration, the resulting integrative structures coordinate and solidify social structure which the forces of differentiation threaten to fragment. In many cases the integrative associations are parties displaying great instability such as religious sects becoming political clubs. The resultant fluidity points up the extremely pressing needs for reintegration under conditions of rapid, irregular, and disruptive processes of differentiation (269).

As for the social disturbance or the discontinuities in differentiation and integration, the structural changes associated with modernization are disruptive to the social order because differentiation demands the creation of new activities, norms, and sanctions – money, political position, and so on. These often conflict with old modes of social action, which are frequently dominated by traditional religious, tribal, and kinship systems. These traditional standards are among the most inflexible of obstacles to modernization, and when they are threatened, serious dissatisfaction and opposition arise. The faster the tempo of modernization, the more severe are the discontinuities. This unevenness creates anomie in the classical sense, for it generates disharmony between life experiences and the normative framework by which these experiences are regulated. By tradition, the new forms of integration compete with the old undifferentiated systems of solidarity. The new result is a three-way tug-of-war among the forces of tradition, the forces of differentiation, and the new forces of integration. Such conditions create virtually unlimited potentialities for group conflict. Three responses to these discontinuities are anxiety, hostility, and fantasy (270-271).