

CHAPTER 4

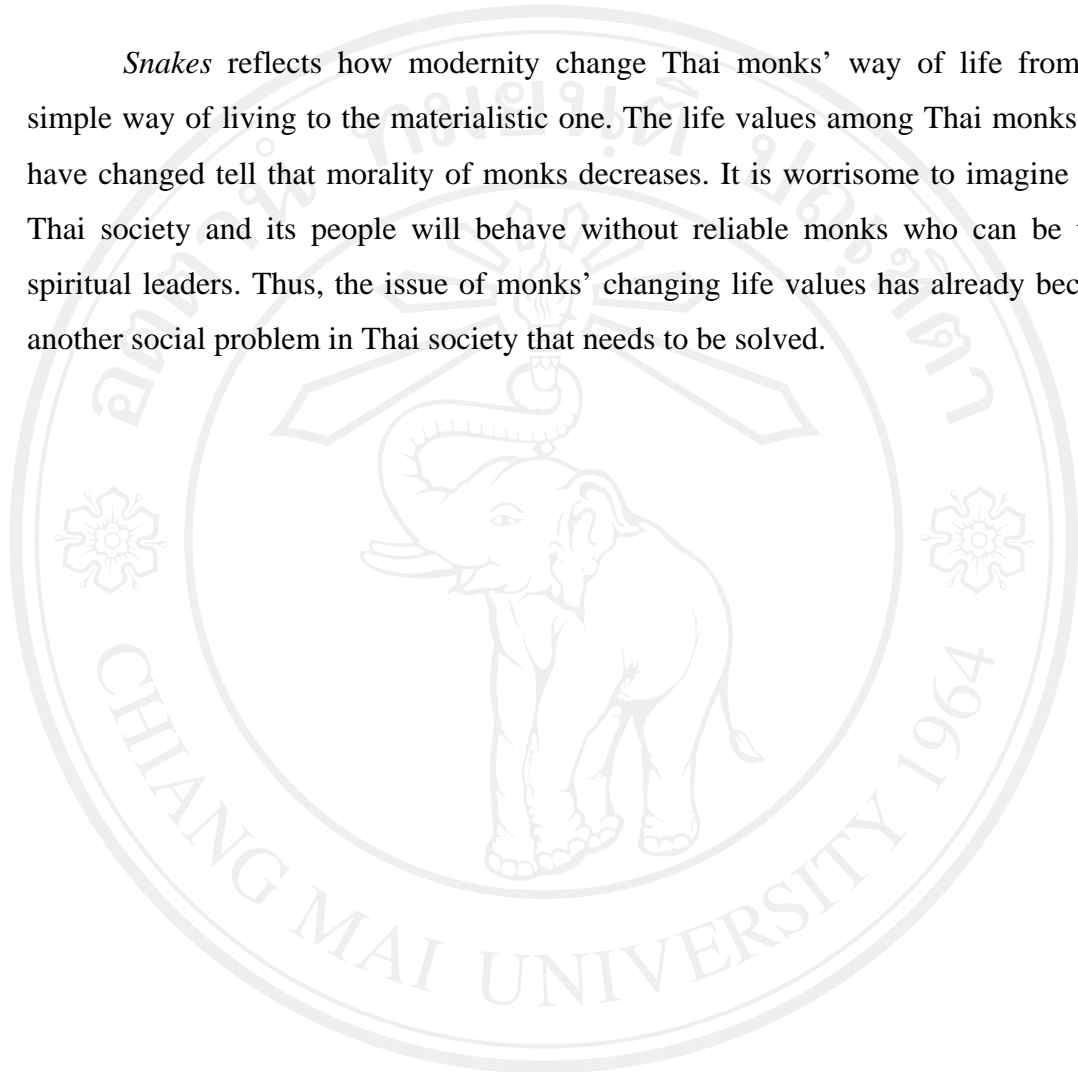
CONCLUSION

Buddhist monks and Thai people have a closer bond and communal cooperation. As monks play an important role as spiritual leaders in Thai society, Thai people give a full of trust and respect to monks by virtue of their moral integrity and exemplary conducts. However, when Thailand starts its national economic development project in order to modernize the country, western style of living has replaced Thai traditional way of life. Thai people enjoy modern commodities and comfortable accommodation and transportation. They consume modern technologies and spend money for material objects. Social competition increases and people value money as the most important thing in life. This modern force definitely affects monks' life. Monks as members of the society cannot escape from the rampant materialism and consumerism. Monks also desire to consume comfortable objects and money start to matter in their life. The fact that monks live comfortable life by receiving food, money and comfortable commodities from lay people somehow makes them enjoy comfortable life just like the laity and finally they fail to observe monks' disciplines and accomplish their roles.

As materialism and consumerism encourage people to desire more objects, monks who attach themselves to comfortable life feel that what the lay people offer them is not enough. So they start seeking money by persuading people to make merits to gain money from lay people. The life of monks in *Snakes* is far from the way to salvation. Abbot Nian, Old Monk Tei, and Phra Janthorn fail to observe disciplines as well as fail to teach Dharma to the laity. Instead of learning Dharma and practice mediation, everyday Abbot Nian spends time thinking of how to get money to renovate the temple and to create image of the temple, and Old Monk Tei spends time creating and selling talismans. The Abbot does not help lift up the living condition of the Khoak Phranang villagers. In contrast, he exploits them by asking for donation all

the time. Moreover, the Abbot becomes a tool of the local politician in order to get financial support from him.

Snakes reflects how modernity change Thai monks' way of life from the simple way of living to the materialistic one. The life values among Thai monks that have changed tell that morality of monks decreases. It is worrisome to imagine how Thai society and its people will behave without reliable monks who can be their spiritual leaders. Thus, the issue of monks' changing life values has already become another social problem in Thai society that needs to be solved.



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