

# PROMOTING BUDDHIST MENTAL WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY IN NONG HIN COMMUNITY, KHOK KO SUB-DISTRICT, MUEANG MAHA SARAKHAM DISTRICT, MAHA SARAKHAM PROVINCE

<sup>(1)</sup> PHRA CHANYA JARUTHAMMO (KASANG), <sup>(2)</sup> PHRAMAHA DAOSAYAM VAJIRAPAÑÑO, <sup>(3)</sup> PHRAMAHA MIT THITAPANYO\*,

<sup>(1)(2)(3)</sup> Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,  
Khon Kaen Campus, Thailand

E-mail: <sup>(1)</sup>chanyakasang@gmail.com, <sup>(2)</sup>starsiam45@gmail.com, <sup>(3)</sup>mit.wan@mcu.ac.th

\*Corresponding Author e-mail: mit.wan@mcu.ac.th

**Abstract:** *The objectives of this research were: 1) to study Buddhist mental well-being; 2) to study the Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province; 3) to study the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community. This study was carried out by means of qualitative research by studying documents and fieldwork to collect the data through an in-depth interview with 22 key informants. The obtained data were interpreted by descriptive analysis. The research results were as follows: Buddhist mental well-being: mental well-being is a state of mind that is not stressed, happy, physically healthy, has a strong body, and is free from disease. Buddhism teaches everyone to be able to exercise their bodies and minds to live in a changing society. The Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community: mental well-being is emotional stability. The ability to make decisions and the ability to deal with situations and environments of Ban Nong Hin community elderly have to be adapted to changing conditions all the time. The Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community: exercise strengthens the body and has a calming effect on the mind. Meditation leads to a stable mind to build immunity against various diseases from mental tension. There is a walking meditation activity, meditating and listening to Dhamma can make Paññā with more consciousness to understand conditions or events and this makes the mind happy with change acceptance.*

**Keywords:** *Promoting Buddhist Mental, Well-being, Elderly*

## 1) INTRODUCTION

According to a survey of the elderly in Thailand in 2007 by the National Statistical Office, it was found that 46.8% of the elderly assessed themselves as being in good to very good health, 21.50% and 28.00% assessed themselves as being in poor to very bad health. For chronic diseases, it was found that the elderly were known to have high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. However, data from a physical examination survey showed that 48% and 16% of older adults had hypertension and diabetes, with 44% and 22% of those having hypertension and diabetes without prior knowledge that they have such a condition. Whereas the causes of health loss among the elderly in 2004, the number 1 was a stroke at 12.5% and 13.50% among males and females respectively. The number 2 was chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD, liver cancer, ischemic heart disease, and diabetes in men, and women were diabetes mellitus, ischemic heart disease, dementia, and liver cancer. The current rate of elderly health services for acute illness treatment and chronic disease care was 4.4 times/person/year. And the



use of inpatient services 0.1 times/person/year, the rate of hospital stay is 7 days/person/year on average (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2007: 72) [1].

The functioning of organs in the body decreased causing the risk of disease especially chronic diseases which is a major health problem for the elderly. There are reports of elderly people around the world that 7% have at least 1 chronic disease, consistent with a survey in the United States of America. Even though it is a developed country, about 8% of the elderly aged 65 years and over have at least 1 chronic disease and about 50% have at least 2 chronic diseases. There is also an increasing trend of mental health problems in the elderly such as depression, stress, and anxiety. For Thailand, the survey found that more than 54.90% percent of the elderly suffer from chronic diseases. The chronic disease that the elderly are most likely to suffer from is cardiovascular disease, endocrine disease, musculoskeletal disease, bone and joint disease. Cardiovascular disease and endocrine diseases are on the rise continuously (Somsak Chunharas, 2009) [2].

The word "health" in the Tipitaka scriptures, there is saying the condition of having good physical health with 2 words that are Appabadho, having few illnesses, or Appatamko, having few diseases like the Bhikkhu in this Dhamma-Vinaya..... which was a person with little ailment, had a mild disease, a person in this world does not oppress animals and reincarnate as a human anywhere he will have less disease. Bhikkhu, who practices according to this, will receive the following merits; After death, if he is not going to be born in heaven, reincarnated as a human anywhere he will be less ill. The Buddha spoke about the importance of having good physical health, and no disease and that it was the most suitable time for cultivating. If the body was sick, it couldn't be healed. His Highness would focus primarily on psychological healing. As the story said that once there was a monk who was terminally ill. The Buddha healed the mind and said that even though his body was in severe pain, he was still able to develop toward enlightenment. The Buddha's view on sickness expressed one of the following; the body was a nest of disease, and when the body was the base or the location of the disease, it was normal to suffer some form of illness. Another word was the word "Arogaya", no disease. As the Buddha said, Arogaya Parama Labha means the absence of disease is a great fortune. The word "Arogaya" on the other hand, was circumstances without mental illness alone. As the Buddha said people who were free from physical disease for a long time or no physical diseases were present at all. But those who did not have mental illnesses even for a moment were rare except for the Arahant who had no defilements from all desires (A. [Thai] 22:53-54/92-93) [3].

The doctrines in Buddhism are holistic in all senses which may be considered from the beginning, it is a holistic nature, not inclined towards seeking and consuming only physical pleasures nurturing more than enough, it's called "Kamasukhallikanuyoga" or concentrating on liberation until concentrating on destroying and limiting desire physical necessity which may be skewed toward physical perfection as an obstacle to spiritual life, known as "Attakilamathanuyoga". Prince Siddhartha gives up extreme physical pleasures. It is thought that it is a way to conceal the opportunity to seek spiritual happiness and return to a new lifestyle by neglecting physical well-being for six years before it is understood that this inappropriate way such a balance is not the best solution so he turns back to take care of his physical health and stop torturing himself. This path is a way of equilibrium that understands the right way. Therefore, this road is called the middle path. Majjhima Patipada is a practice that does not lean in any way which is the basis of reality according to the law of reason, which is the middle path itself (Vin. [Thai] 4/24/38) [4].



Therefore, the researchers are interested in studying “Promoting Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province” on the issue of Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly, Buddhist mental health promotion activities for the elderly and Buddhist mental health promotion methods of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province.

## **2) RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 2.1) How is Buddhist mental well-being?
- 2.2) How is the Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province?
- 2.3) How is the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province?

## **3) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1) To study Buddhist mental well-being
- 3.2) To study the Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province
- 3.3) To study the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province

## **4) RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is qualitative research, fieldwork by interviews of the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province by studying from the target group. The researchers define the research method as follows;

- 4.1) 4.1) Documentary study and data collection from relevant documents and evidence from the Tripitaka, books, and research reports about the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province.
- 4.2) Data from 25 sets of in-depth interviews from the main key informant groups related to the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province.
- 4.3) Observations participant, and a focus group with key informants about the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province.

## **5) EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 5.1) To know Buddhist mental well-being
- 5.2) To know the Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province
- 5.3) To know the Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province



## 6) RESEARCH RESULTS

**6.1) Buddhist mental well-being:** Experiencing a happy state of mind, having a strong body without affliction, being satisfied, and having hope in things, Buddhist principles teach everyone to do good deeds in order to escape from suffering. There is no pressure condition both physically and mentally such as giving alms, keeping the precepts, practicing good mental health making merit in the morning and keeping the precepts and grow kindness, and development that they can do good deeds and not harm others. A trained mind is comfortable, and work is accomplished, even if the body is sick, it can be free, being able to make merit, giving alms, and helping society. In addition, chanting before going to bed, and defilements are obsessive objects that cause suffering, do not understand the rules and practices in Buddhism, for example, when physically ill, it cannot be accepted, therefore suffering mentally. The state of the mind is suffering. Because the mind is not at peace because of physical disease, it causes a psychological impact.

**6.2) The Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province:** Mental health is emotional stability. The ability to make decisions and the ability to deal with situations and environments of Ban Nong Hin community elderly who have to adapt to changing conditions all the time. Psychological stability is considered essential to controlling faculty training. The management of mental stability requires stable emotions by eliminating the defilements of the Nivarana 5 (hindrances) not to overwhelm the mind in life. It makes the mind confident in doing good deeds and without hesitation in the teachings of the Buddha. The monks should often introduce the villagers. In the matter of keeping the precepts, prospering kindness and development, praying for the happiness of the society, and not suffering like the existence of the stability of the mind by using the Buddhist principles to develop such as having morals is what goes around, comes around. In Buddhism, mental stability is organized in terms of Pariyatti (teaching to be studied or mastered) and Patipatti (teaching to be practised) as a tool to control human mental states. The stability of the mind can be organized in any Buddhist pattern.

**6.3) The Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province:** Exercise strengthens the body and has a calming effect on the mind. Sitting meditation makes the mind stable in order to build immunity against various diseases, it will not cause mental tension. Waking meditation activity, sitting meditation, and listening to the Dhamma can lead to wisdom being more conscious than previously understood. Conditions or events can cause the mind to accept changes in happiness. Daily physical activity will strengthen the body and have a calming effect on the mind, the functioning of the respiratory system, and the functioning of all organs in the body.

## 7) DISCUSSION

**7.1) Buddhist mental well-being:** Mental health is a state of mind that is not stressed, happy, physically healthy, and free from disease. Buddhism teaches everyone to be able to exercise their bodies and minds in order to live in a changing society. Experiencing a happy state of mind, having a strong body without affliction, being satisfied, and having hope from things, Buddhist principles teach everyone to do good deeds in order to escape from suffering. There is no pressure condition both physically and mentally such as giving alms, keeping the precepts and development. It is consistent with (Phra Dhammamori (Thongyoo Nanavisuddho), 2008: Abstract) [5] study "The analytical study of lifestyle health behavior and holistic health care by the monks as identified in the Tipitaka". It was found that the



concept according to Buddhist doctrines is well-being or health means the complete happiness of life in the body (Kayika-Sukha) and mental (Cetasika-Sukha). The overall composition of these components is divided into 5 aspects: physical, mental precepts (social and environmental), and intellectual. Which human life will be happy, the holistic dimensions of these 4 aspects must be coordinated as one. It may be the nature of the patient or the nature of the patient-physician relationship. It is always important to follow the doctor's advice, and nurses or caregivers more focusing of seeking knowledge to take care of their own health which is an important characteristic in Thai society.

**7.2) The Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province:** Mental health is emotional stability. The ability to make decisions and the ability to deal with situations and environments of Ban Nong Hin community elderly who have to adapt to changing conditions all the time. Psychological stability is considered essential to controlling faculty training. The management of mental stability requires stable emotions by eliminating the defilements of the Nivarana 5 (hindrances) not to overwhelm the mind in life. It makes the mind confident in doing good deeds and without hesitation in the teachings of the Buddha. The monks should often introduce the villagers. In the matter of keeping the precepts, prospering kindness and development, and praying for the happiness of the society. It is consistent with [Saowanee Ruedee, 2011: Abstract] [6] study "Buddhist holistic health: A case study of clinical diabetes patients at Rajavithi Hospital". It was found that the samples with differences in sex, ages, occupations, educations, incomes, and intervening diseases, got significant differences in behavior and cognition of Buddhist holistic health at 0.01 level. Whereas the sample with differences in weight, height, marital status, duration of clinical diabetes, stay / non-stay for treatment at the hospital, and the level of intervening diseases got no differences in the level of behavior and cognition of Buddhist holistic health.

**7.3) The Buddhist mental well-being promotion of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province:** Exercise strengthens the body and has a calming effect on the mind. Sitting meditation makes the mind stable in order to build immunity against various diseases, it will not cause mental tension. Waking meditation activity, sitting meditation, and listening to the Dhamma can lead to wisdom being more conscious than previously understood. Conditions or events can cause the mind to accept changes in happiness. Daily physical activity will strengthen the body and have a calming effect on the mind, the functioning of the respiratory system, and the functioning of all organs in the body work better, creating immunity to various diseases. It is consistent with [Patra Chunin, 2011: Abstract] [7] study "Model for making the proper health on the sex and age of people in Saad village, Moo 2, Mafieng Sub-District, Putthaisong District, Buriram Province". It was found that the problem situation of the community health classified by sex and age were found that the males lacked the warmth in the family, went out to work in a different area, the female lacked the warmth in the family, their father worked in other areas, they were far from their father and lacked the advocator. The proper model for making people's health should compose of six items 1) the leadership in the community, namely, the most people was interested to know the environment around their area and new thing as well as to be ready to give participatory with the researcher 2) there was the modern knowledge in the community, that is, the making of the public communication network, the association as well as the different organizations for the participation of all association 3) the community had the good relationship with each other 4) there was the good management process in the community 5) there was the conservative of local wisdom in the community



and 6) there was the keep-watching process of danger in the community, that is, the setting of the watchman in the community.

## **8) NEW EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE**

Mental health is a state of mind that is not stressed, happy, physically healthy, and free from disease. Buddhism teaches everyone to be able to exercise their bodies and minds in order to live in a changing society. The mental well-being of the elderly in Ban Nong Hin community, Khok Ko sub-district, Maha Sarakham Province is mental health that is emotional stability, the ability to make decisions, and the ability to deal with situations and environments of Ban Nong Hin community elderly who have to adapt to changing conditions all the time and promoting Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province has an exercise that makes the body strong and has a calming effect on the mind. Exercise strengthens the body and has a calming effect on the mind. Sitting meditation makes the mind stable in order to build immunity against various diseases, it will not cause mental tension. Waking meditation activity, sitting meditation, and listening to the Dhamma can lead to wisdom being more conscious than previously understood. Conditions or events can cause the mind to accept changes in happiness.

## **9) CONCLUSION**

Experiencing a happy state of mind, having a strong body without affliction, being satisfied, and having hope in things, Buddhist principles teach everyone to do good deeds in order to escape from suffering. There is no pressure condition both physically and mentally such as giving alms, keeping the precepts, practicing good mental health making merit in the morning and keeping the precepts and grow kindness, and development and mental stability require stable emotions by eliminating the defilements of the Nivarana 5 (hindrances) not to overwhelm the mind in life. It makes the mind confident in doing good deeds and without hesitation in the teachings of the Buddha. The monks should often introduce the villagers. In the matter of keeping the precepts, prospering kindness and development, and praying for the happiness of the society. The human mind is to live according to the mental state of each person's life. There are differences. Daily physical activity will strengthen the body and have a calming effect on the mind, the functioning of the respiratory system, and the functioning of all organs in the body work better, creating immunity to various diseases. Reducing waste body fat makes the body stronger, reducing the risk of disease depending on the condition of the person's body. Walking meditation makes our body strong, free from disease, and gives longevity, has a calming effect on the mind.

## **10) RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **10.1) Recommendations for Policy**

1. Promoting Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province should be more public-private partnership than there is today.
2. It should be organized as a learning project for Buddhists.

### **10.2) Recommendations for Academic**

1. To bring information to further academic dissemination
2. To be a reference of research related to promoting mental well-being of the elderly



### 10.3 Recommendations for Practices

1. To be the information for studying promoting Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District
2. To the organizing committee can use the research information to improve promoting the mental health of the elderly in the next time

### 10.4 Recommendations for applying the research results

1. The government agencies receive the concept of promoting Buddhist mental well-being of the elderly in Nong Hin community, Khok Ko Sub-District, Mueang Maha Sarakham District, Maha Sarakham Province to integrate.
2. The Sangha uses the information from this research to provide training for promoting the mental well-being of the elderly in their jurisdiction.

## 11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. (2007). Bangkok: Faculty of Social Administration: Thammasat University.
- [2] Somsak Chunharas. (2009). *The situation of the Thai elderly*. Bangkok: TQP Co, Ltd.
- [3] A. [Thai] 22/53-54/92-93 cited in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya. (1996). *Thai Tipitaka: Thai Version*. Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press.
- [4] Vin. (Thai) 4/24/38 cited in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya. (1996). *Thai Tipitaka: Thai Version*. Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Press.
- [5] Phra Dhammamori (Thongyoo Nanavisuddho). (2008). *The analytical study of lifestyle health behavior and holistic health care by the monks as identified in the Tipitaka*. Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
- [6] Saowanee Ruedee. (2011). *Buddhist holistic health: A case study of clinical diabetes patients at Rajavithi Hospital*. Master of Arts Program in Psychology of Life and Death, Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
- [7] Patra Chunin. (2011). *Model for making the proper health on the sex and age of people in Saad village, Moo 2, Mafieng Sub-District, Putthaisong District, Buriram Province*. Master of Arts Program in Research and Development, Graduate School, Buriram Rajabhat University.