

Communication for Social Reconciliation in Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

This study has its aim to study 1) the theoretical concepts of the communication for social reconciliation in Buddhism (CSRB); 2) the problems related to reconciliation communication; 3) the model of CSRB. This research was conducted under the qualitative research methodology by investigating the relevant documentary and conducting an in-depth interview. Its population and targeted group, recruited by Purposive Sampling consisted of 32 key informants including Buddhist monks, academics or professionals, local administrative organization's officers, and community leaders or local scholars. The findings revealed that 1) theoretical concepts of CRB are considered as the communication under the principles of consciousness, wisdom, carefulness, and other Buddhist principles to create the happiness of both message senders and receivers. The problems of communication mainly are rooted in bias and a lack of reasoning. The indicators of CSRB consists of the Six States of Conciliation (Sālāṇiyadhamma), the Four Bases of Social Solidarity (Saṅgahavattthu), and the Four States of Mind (Brahmavihāra); 2) problems of reconciliation communication are caused by the following factors: the desire to influence each other; too many options available; desire to alter others' belief, emotion and behavior; inadequate communication skill; vague information; lack of universality; prejudice and environmental barrier; 3) the model of CRB consisted of three major elements: (1) Buddhist communication which is the communication based on the intellectual potential of the individual, communication-based on the principles of good friends, the truth and abstaining from untruthful speech, pandit-hood, good conduct and so on; (2) the communication goal consisted of instructional goal and proper conducts; (3) the communication process based on the Threefold Learning Principles (Trisikkha).

Keywords

Communication for reconciliation; Buddhism; Social reconciliation; Thailand

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Introduction

The word 'communication' (Latin 'Communicar', meaning 'to share') refers to the act of communicating with people [1]. Communication is also the process that two or more people exchange or share messages, ideas, information, and attitude in ways to receivers [2]. Human communication consists of the sender (S), message (M), channel (C), and receiver (R)[3]. Today, the main objective of communication is to make a receiver gain right and complete information because, in society, it seems to be more complicated, people live their lives hurriedly, and competition happens in every single minute with predominant information; thus, using old ways in communicating may not be suitable for human needs in the right time. Moreover, people need to adjust themselves to be up to date all the time. Also, the growth of social networks differentiates the style in sending news widely and boundlessly expanded. As mentioned, the social network is one of several options used in communicating altogether with technology [4].

Communication is needed in the human community. In ancient times, humans used a simple way to communicate with one another such as, speaking, using animals as messengers, or writing a letter. After the science wave had been discovered, the world's communication was then changed using the telegraph, telephone, and radio. Until humans found the way to communicate with computers and internet systems, our world had a huge change in communication. The media are adapted and involved more with an electronic system, for example, IRC (Internet Relay

Chat), chat programs, electronic mail or e-mail, and web Board. Recently, human shares their daily lives by using a social network, as a medium, to connect them all and intervene it in their lives [4]. Interpersonal communication, limited resources, and differential processes of working and characteristics cause highly interpersonal conflicts [5]. Information receiving and internal organizational cooperation are also in trouble. Thai society is now encountering crisis conflicts which cause terrible situations as we can see nowadays and there are many important variables in those cases, for instance, rapacious benefit and requirement, different information for presenting and understanding, different relationships of two or more groups, and extreme different perspectives on the economy, politics, and social. Political violence since 2006 has caused the waste of objects and was a period full of fear and suspicion when people were not able to talk about the situation even talk with friends or relatives because there were different opinions in many communities that cultivated people for a long time. As stated earlier, the organizational conflict cannot be solved by communication because it is just temporary that does not help to fix the real cause. Also, some organizations have too much communication called over-communication. Many results of the research specify that good communication in an organization should be optimal level and the administrator should know that communication is not such a thing that can always calm the conflict [6].

The Buddhist communication principle resulted from the Buddha's enlightenment which happened approximately 2500 years ago. The reason that Buddhism has been for ages

is that there is an important factor in propagating the teachings ‘Caratha, bhikkhave, cārikam bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam’ [7] meaning ‘monks, you need to go around for generous benefits, leading ways of happiness to people, attempting the world, and gods’ and people’s happiness. This Buddha’s teaching is the heart of Buddhist propagation of the Fourfold Buddhist Assembly (monk, Buddhist nun, layman, and laywoman) who help propagate and maintain Buddha’s teachings widely. The Buddha declared several elements of communication principles based on Buddhism such as good and bad communication based on Right Speech, a morality of life for all people [8].

Furthermore, the Buddha also taught that speaking is to use optimal words at the right time, which was to speak for harmony, not for conflict his words in Kathāvatthu (Subjects for Discussion): 1) Appicchakathā (talk about or favorable to wanting little); 2) Santuṭṭhikathā (talk about or favorable to contentment); 3) Pavivekakathā (talk about or favorable to seclusion); 4) Asamsaggakathā (talk about or favorable to not mingling together); 5) Viriyārambhakathā (talk about or favorable to strenuousness); 6) Siakathā (talk about or favorable to virtue or good conduct); 7) Samādhikathā (talk about or favorable to concentration); 8) Paññākathā (talk about or favorable to understanding or insight); 9) Vimuttikathā (talk about or favorable to deliverance); 10) Vimuttiñāṇadassanakathā (talk about or favorable to the knowledge and vision of deliverance) Above all, good communication is that people have not to slander others, speak rude words, and talk nonsense. That is to say, the right speech is the main purpose in communication which indicates successful communication [9].

The communication system under modern technology is influenced by the changes in human development capabilities. Information is transformed by essential details or contexts specified in the change of people’s perspectives. It is because communication can change personal opinion and attitude as well as way of live and living tradition in the society. Communication helps people comprehend and is an important factor of democracy [10]. Hence, communication is important to every situation to help people understand and can build ‘reconciliation’ in society. Reconciliation, written in Royal Institute Dictionary, refers to ‘compromise which is to be kindly agreeable’[11]. To make the society united employs times and good systematic processes. It is also to see current problems to the way to decrease and solve them and understand the cause of the conflict with law enforcement and public policies. Moreover, environmental conditions are essential due to the balance of politics, economy, and social which engender the vision of country development based on human stability and the principle of law.

Consequently, Buddhist communication is an essential instrument to reconcile society by applying mind, law, social factors, culture, and current politics. The researchers are keen on Buddhist communication for reconciliation in society to fulfill as objectives.

Objectives

The objective of the study was to study 1) the theoretical concepts of CSRB; 2) the problems related to reconciliation communication; 3) the model of CSRB.

Methodology

The study was carried out utilizing quantitative research. There were 32 key informants: 1) 8 monks, 2) 10 scholars or experts, 3) 4 local administrative governors, and 4) 10 village leaders or local philosophers. The instrument used to collect data was an interview. The obtained data were interpreted by the descriptive analysis and presented by the content analysis afterward.

Research Results

Concepts and Theories of CSRB

1) The meaning of Buddhist communication: it refers to communicating based on self and individual quality reliability which is the reliability in the law of action in line with the factors of oneself and others. To have good communication is to be aware of bad speech controlled by consciousness and wisdom.

2) The characteristics and expressions of senders and receivers: those who involved the communication need to follow Kalyāṇamitta-dhamma (Qualities of a good friend), the mutual relationship was by Pañcasīla (the Five Precepts: to refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicants)[8] and Pañcadhamma (the Five Ennobling Virtues: loving-kindness and compassion, right means of livelihood, sexual restraint, truthfulness, and mindfulness) [8]. Besides, it is also essential that people had to follow news and world changes to be up to date. The sender should persuade the listener to apply good practices for the benefits of oneself and society.

3) The details of Buddhist communication: this relates to Ariyasacca (The Four Noble Truths) by Tilakkhaṇa (Three Characteristics): Aniccata (Impermanence), Dukkhatā (suffering), Anattatā (not-self). The communication based on Buddhist teachings could be summarized in 2 categories: 1) Saccadhamma (truth), it is pure nature that is teaching about arising, living, and degeneration of everything; 2) Cariyādhamma (righteousness), it is to practice principles, social living and principles of suffering liberation based on Sammādiṭṭhi (Right Understanding) [8].

4) Buddhist communication methods: the Buddha taught Sammāvācā (right speech) in consonance with the fourth of Pañcasīla that is to communicate truth, knowledge, goodness, and beauty, not to cause disharmony to others.

5) The results of communication: elements of Buddhist communication for communicators, receivers, media or information, and communicative method should be the last result of the goals which is to make the receiver understand a real value and benefit with faith and consideration that could be brought into precious behavior. Hence, when doing right according to dhamma principles, life would be happy and far from suffering and that would also be beneficial for others.

6) Problems and obstacles in communication: communicators lack a good technique and media to convince the receivers. It might be that both a communicator and a receiver had a bias toward one another. As for the information, it is unclear and difficult to understand: there are no obvious issues sent out. Gestures and signals are ineffective because they are jargon even though they are universal. So, the conflict might occur because of different backgrounds and misunderstandings.

7) Principles of information acknowledged behaviors in Buddhist communication: it is important to consider in receiving information with reasonable and right principles of *Yonisomanasikāra* (proper attention) and *Kālamāsutta* (Doubtful Dealing). When having any information, to consider and classify advantages and disadvantages is the best way to keep up with to avoid misunderstanding and conflict. Importantly, as a Buddhist, to hold on consideration principle more than one's emotions is significant in information receiving.

8) Communication for peace and reconciliation: good communication should focus on completing one's goal and should not bother others: so, it is to support others and the public sector. Both communicator or sender and receiver should follow dhamma principles for Buddhist communication to lead a proper behavior in body, speech, and mind according to *Sīla* (Precepts), *Samādhi* (Mindfulness), and *Pañña* (Wisdom).

9) The concept of reconciliation: reconciliation condition is to be united and trust each other. Solving without facing one another and cooperate in seeking the way out together peacefully. The reconciliation helps the society stable and safe in lives and assets. When people are united, the country, as well as the world, would be peaceful: conflict and fear would be gone because people have good memories of each other. Therefore, reconciliation begins with facts and shreds of evidence by writing and speaking. The truth brings comprehension and forgiving which society would live with democracy because everybody has their rights. The majority voice is important.

10) Indicators of Buddhist communication for reconciliation: the measurements of success and result of Buddhist communication for reconciliation are *Sāraṇīyadhamma* (Sixfold of States of Conciliation): 1) *Mettākāyakkamma*: to be amiable indeed, openly and in private; 2) *Mettāvācikkamma*: to be amiable in word, openly and in private; 3) *Mettāmanokamma*: to be amiable in thought, openly and in private; 4) *Sādhāṇaṇabhogitā*: to share any lawful gains with virtuous fellows; 5) *Sīlasāmaññatā*: to keep without blemish the rules of conduct along with one's fellows, openly and in private; and 6) *Diṭṭhisāmaññatā*: to be endowed with right views along with one's fellows, openly and in private.

Problems of communication for reconciliation

1) Influence requirement: it is bad behavior that some bad influencers arbitrarily assumed the power to convince others in following by using domination of economy, politics, and government service system. On the other hand, using informal domination is to undermines democracy. Politic power under the influential person does not truly come from people's intentions and needs. For instance, mass media has

the power to spread news, thoughts, beliefs, and ideologies that are important mechanisms in both resisting and supporting social change: therefore, the mass media is influential in specifying people; is the center in producing acceptable culture until it becomes behavior such as, consumerism culture and violent culture.

2) Having various options: receiving information from many channels might affect different thinking and people's paradigms. Some of those mentioned come from different cultures, geographies, beliefs, religions, nationalities, languages and so on which push people into conflict and continuing violence. Thai society inclines to be more violent which begins with oneself, family, community, organization, and other businesses in public and private sectors as well as an international conflict.

3) Changing needs of belief, emotion, and others' behaviors: these happen due to ideology and leadership influential persons want acceptance and love from others and tried to grab spaces of news media to build their righteousness. It divides political groups that affect the family level.

4) Lacking communicative skill: being unable to communicate for living and working affects interpersonal relations because there are inappropriate words and situations, and people use the wrong language. When any public organization would like to work on some project but they could not communicate and inform right information, people do not have enough details. It leads to misunderstanding so that people could not work on the project as well they lost faith and distrust the public organization. Likewise, the communication process should come with *Sikkhā* (learning), leadership, and good human relations so that any information the communicator sent would be completed and the conflict and misunderstanding would not happen even there are some different opinions.

5) Unclear and unconsidered information: because of time limitation and competition, a communicator and a receiver could not revise details and methods of the information before sending it out. Such details and methods even sometimes they were just what somebody imagined would be harmful if somebody trusted and followed. Also, information without Buddhist teaching would not be beneficial for gender, status, maturity, perception, age, tradition, and environment. Then, it might be conflict among people who received that wrong information until it is over-controlled.

6) Details are not universal: different languages are the main issue of misunderstanding because each language has its uniqueness and cultural contexts. Thus, the cooperative group plays an important part to help people in society create understanding which could develop by several skills, for example, thinking, grouping, social contacting, and knowledge seeking.

7) Bias: sometimes we, as receivers, might face that we could not communicate well with the communicator because we and the communicator could not separate private matters from working processes. As stated earlier, we would be close-minded to accept differences so that the work is undone and people become distrusted to each other.

8) Bad environment: any communication should be at the right time and place so that any information would be sent smoothly. Speaking serious issues in others' rest times in inappropriate places such as private matters would be

harmful to have complete communication. Moreover, the environment in the community and differences in social beliefs would lead to different actions.

Methods and Processes of CSRB

1) Elements of Buddhist communication consist of 1) the four levels of Buddha's communication principles according to personal intelligence, 2) communication in line with the Sevenfold Kalyāṇamitta-dhamma, 3) truth communication and ignorance of the Fourfold Musāvāda (Wrong speech), 4) respect for oneself and others as knowledgeable communicator and receiver based on the truth, 5) being well-behaved communicator and receiver, 6) following Sappurisa-dhamma (the Sevenfold virtue of the righteous), 7) following Yonisomanasikāra (reasoned attention) for internal communication and Paratoghosa (another's utterance) for external communication, and 8) following Kāmālasutta (dealing with doubtful matters) before believing and doing.

2) Intentions of Buddhist communication consist of 1) Buddha's teaching intentions: Abhiññāya-dhammadesanā (teaching with full comprehension), Sanidāna-dhammadesanā (teaching in terms of or concerning causality), and Sappāṭihhāriya-dhammadesanā (teaching in terms of or concerning causality), and 2) purposes of research analysis results: right and good actions for gods' and humans' happiness.

3) Buddhist communication process based on Sikkhā is to inform people to know their social responsibilities with good intention and support Buddhism by organizing dhamma activities for perceiving manners, traditions, and cultures so that monks and laymen would understand each other. Good communication would happen when people try to practice systematically and reasonably. Furthermore, people should hold active learning for speaking and listening with the truth and try not to become badly influential in direct and indirect ways. People should follow the right speech and dialogue with the principle of law by having the past as life lessons as well as respecting others' rights to avoid social conflicts.

4) Reconciliation is a process to prevent conflicts and violence with peaceful methods comprised of important characters: compromise, mutual understanding, and generosity. This reveals that people should keep on percepts to behave right things, not to exploit others, and respect social laws and legal state. When people have the same purposes and focus on the right things, society would be peaceful and everybody would live happily. As mentioned above, it leads to the construction of the model of CSRB shown in Figure 1 below in the Appendix.

Recommendation

Recommendations for Policies: organizations of public, private, public enterprise, and local administration should have practice guidelines of Buddhist communication integrated with organizational culture support through activities about administration and organizational staff relations based on Buddhist human resources management.

Recommendations for Operative Application: organizations of public, private, public enterprise, local administrative, and educational institutions should apply Buddhist communication as a project or activity to arrange the workshop to improve human relations for organizational staff and community by Thai and Buddhist methods.

Recommendations for the Future Study: the future study should specific social conflict area and experiment research methodology to resolve the problems focusing on the participation of other connection members..

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