



Inequality never disappears in Buddhist society, explained through the representation of women under patriarchy

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สารสังเขป

บทความวิชาการนี้เชิญชวนทุกคนร่วมหาคำตอบเรื่อง ภูตผี ปีศาจ ตามทัศนะของศาสนาอิสลาม ว่าข้อเท็จจริงเป็นเช่นไร สิ่งเหล่านี้มีอยู่จริงหรือไม่ และโลกอื่นนอกเหนือจากโลกมนุษย์มีสิ่งถูกสร้างอื่นที่มองไม่เห็นอีกหรือไม่ เช่นตามภาษาอิสลามจะเรียกว่า มะลาอิกะฮฺ ญิน ซัยฏอน และอื่นๆที่ควรรู้ ข้อค้นพบว่า ตามทัศนะของอิสลามไม่ได้มีภูตผี ปีศาจตามลักษณะความเชื่อของคนทั่วไป และไม่ได้เรียกบรรดาสิ่งถูกสร้างที่อยู่ในโลกอื่นที่ต่างจากโลกมนุษย์ว่า ภูต ผี ปีศาจ แต่จะเรียกพวกเขาด้วยชื่ออื่นที่แตกต่างกัน ตามลักษณะและเป้าหมายของการสร้าง พวกเขามีอยู่จริง แต่มีลักษณะการมีชีวิตอีกแบบหนึ่ง ภาระหน้าที่และการงานของพวกเขาจะหลากหลาย พวกเขามีทั้งดี และชั่ว เป็นที่น่าสนใจที่จะต้องเรียนรู้ต่อไปในบทความชิ้นนี้

คำสำคัญ: ภูต ผี ปีศาจ ทัศนะอิสลาม

Currently the concept of equality of women and men and the concept of human rights, liberties, and dignity are more increasingly accepted. However, many issues on gender inequality remain. One of the things that have a great influence on Thai society is Buddhism. Buddhism in Thailand has been under the supervision of monks or males since its beginning until today. Consequently, the structure of Thai Buddhism has been dominated by a patriarchal system, in which women are excluded from positions of power in religious institutions. But there have been several women in the religion space, who play the important role in meditation practice. In this article, the author cites three examples of women in religious roles from the past to present: Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam and Khun Mae Chan Dee, who were confirmed by two of the most highly influential forest monks in Thailand, Luang Pu Man Bhuridatto and Luang Ta Mahabua Nyanasampanno, both of them are believed as being arhat. Another woman is currently very well known in meditation practice, Acharavadee Wongsakon. Nonetheless, she is different from the first two persons on the ground that she claims that she can enlighten without a monk's confirmation.

Keywords: Arhat, Buddhism, Mae Chi, Meditation, Women

Introduction

Women in Thai history are in a disadvantageous position in every way. whether it be women's economic, social, political, or social status, they are in a lower position than men. For example, in ancient times, women were forced to marry. Religion had no opportunity to become a nun due to karma, which in Buddhism believed who becoming a woman in this life was the result of evil karma in the previous life, which was believed to prevent women from enlightenment. There is also a belief in Theravada Buddhism that women have to ordain a son to "hold the yellow dress up to heaven" therefore the role of Thai women in Buddhism is the patroness to provide necessary items and relieve the temporal burden for men ordained as monks (Montri, 2010).

Nowadays, the development of Thai women's continuous and progressive development can be seen from the promotion

and support of women's development activities in the public and private sectors, as well as in the community and society at different levels. Women's rights, freedoms, and equality from all sectors are promoted, both internationally and nationally giving women the opportunity to develop themselves more the present social structure allows women to able to play a role in politics whether it is a political expression from voting to running for election and acting as representatives of the people in the council. The author think these are good signs that gender inequality may to an end, both nationally and globally.

As for the role of women in Buddhism today, it is limited in many areas, as a result of beliefs from the past to the present, such as the ordination of a nun is still not possible in Thailand because it is believed to be conflicting with the doctrine of Buddhism. The acceptable role of women in Thai Buddhist society is still only nuns

who keep the Eight Precepts. But there are many interesting cases. That is, there were women in Thai Buddhism in the past who believed that they could attain enlightenment. But the belief that they can attain enlightenment must be confirmed by monks, such as Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam, who is ordained as a nun and has practiced dharma with Luang Pu Man Phuritatto later came to practice dhamma with Luang Ta Mahabua Nyanasampanno. Khun Mae Chan Dee, young sister of Luang Ta Mahabua Nyanasampanno, two people are mentioned above, have the same thing: Luang Ta Mahabua Nyanasampanno is the one who assures that these two people can enlightenment. But there is a difference: Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam must be ordained as a nun, but Khun Mae Chan Dee is just layman. Another interesting one is Acharavadee Wongsakon, who is widely known in the religious community of Thailand today but different from the Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam and Khun Mae Chan Dee. Because she believed that ordinary people could enlighten. Which the three-person mentioned above will be used as an example to compare the role of women in Buddhism in this article.

White dress and sangkhati, symbolic of patriarchy

In this topic, the author would like to give an example of the dress of the three people that will be mentioned in this article, Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam, Khun Mae Chan Dee and



Figure 1 Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam
Source: Toprasert Narongchai, 2012



Figure 2 Khun Mae Chandee
Source: Tnews, 2017

Acharavadee Wongsakon.

From the picture shown above, it can be seen that the one thing the three of them all have in common is a shawl. It's interesting why this is needed. The author notes that this robe is the same as the monk's robe. Sangkhati is a yellow piece of cloth worn by a priest as protection against cold. Thai-English Buddhist dictionary of Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto)

“Sangkhati” into English as the outer robe of a Buddhist monk (Seridhamma, 2022). Thailand is a country with hot weather, so it is not necessary to cover it with Sangkhati. Therefore, the monks in Thailand rarely use Sangkhati cloth to cover the cold for their purposes, but this is necessary because it is prescribed in the vinaya its called “the eight parikkharas” (personal things of a Bhikkhu which include the three of robes, a bowl, a razor, a needle, the girdle, and a water-strainer). when it is necessary and must always carry with them according to the discipline. To cover it like a robe is more than necessary. Thai monks use the Sangkhati on their shoulders fold over the left shoulder in a monk ceremony” (Seridhamma, 2018).

If considering Stuart Hall’s identity concept, which combines culturalism (Culturalism) with a paradigm of Structuralism Antonio Gramsci’s concept of Hegemony was instrumental in linking the two paradigms together. Hall sees that people in a globalized world rarely have a clear standpoint or identity. Because the world and society is changing rapidly. It causes people to struggle, fight, seek, to create their own identity or identity politics (Tangnamo, 2012). From this concept, it is linked to the dress of Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam, Khun Mae Chandee and Acharavadee Wongsakon, who have to wear white and have a shoulder cloth similar to the monk’s sangha cloth because they have to create an identity in order to can live in a society that still favors the patriarchal system



Figure 3 Acharavadee Wongsakon
Source: Masteracharavadee, 2022

The patriarchy still has a strong influence on women in Buddhism, especially in the Thai Forest Tradition or Kammattana tradition.

From the concept of patriarchy in which men are superior to women in all aspects be it economy, politics or culture, this idea, in the author’s view, sees as an idea that made it difficult for women of the past under the regime to make decisions about how to do things. The author would like to give some examples from the history of the lives of Khun Mae Chandee and Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam, for example, during the time Luang Pu Man decided to go on a hike to another place, which Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam would like to follow, but Luang Pu Man prevented it. Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam followed along, citing her femininity that would make the journey difficult. Ajaan Mun’s said to Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam

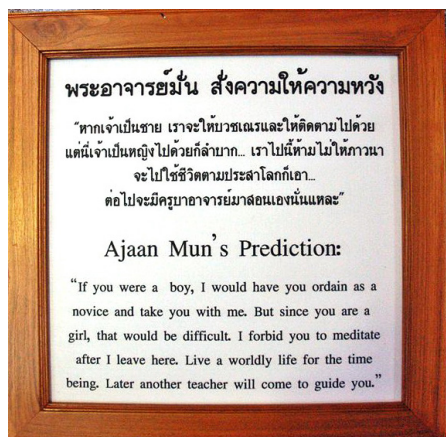


Figure 4 Ajaan Mun's Prediction

Source: <http://www.dhammadjak.net/forums/viewtopic.php?t=42864>

"If you were a boy, I would have you ordain as a novice and take you with me. But since you are a girl, that would be difficult. I forbid you to meditate after I leave here, Live a worldly life for the time being. Later another teacher will come to guide you."

Even Chandee, a sister of Luang Ta Bua. During her life, she did not choose her husband. But the history indicates that his brother recommended the man he had chosen as the best, good-natured, and morally (Dhammadjak.net, 2013). This was evident in the use of the masculine system to frame the lives of women in the past. But can be seen in another view, it is patriarchy that is deeply rooted in the practice of monks.

Faith in a person gained from cultural capital

Buddhism, although it is described that women can attain enlightenment. But in reality,

the role of women in Buddhism is negligible. Eight strict rules, garudhamma, have been used since ancient times for women to be ordained, demonstrating gender inequality.

The eight strict rules, garudhamma, that Mahapajapati was obliged to accept subordinate nuns to monks and make the nuns' order dependent on the monks' order. They are as follows:

1. An almswoman [bhikkhuni], even if of a hundred years standing, shall make Salutation to, shall rise up in the presence of, shall bow down before, and shall perform all proper duties towards an almsman [bhikkhu], if only just initiated. This is a rule to be revered and revered, honoured and observed, and her life long never to be transgressed.

2. An almswoman is not to spend the rainy season (of Vassa [the three months of the year when travel for monks and nuns is restricted) in a district in which there is no almsman. This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

3. Every half-month an almswoman is to await from the Chapter of Almsmen two things, the asking as to (the date of) the Uposatha ceremony, and the (time when the almsman) will come to give the exhortation. This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

4. After keeping the rainy season (of Vassa), the almswoman is to hold Pavarana (to enquire whether any fault can be laid to her charge) before both Sanghas-as well that of the Almsmen as that of the Almswomen-with respect to three matters, namely what has been

seen, and what has been heard, and what has been suspected. This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

5. An almswoman who has been guilty of a serious offence is to undergo the Manatta [penance] discipline towards both the Sanghas (Almsmen and Almswomen). This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

6. When an almswoman, as novice, has been trained for two years in the Six Rules, she is to ask leave for the Upasampada initiation from both Sanghas (as well that of the Almsmen as that of the Almswomen). This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

7. An almswoman is on no pretext to revile or abuse an almsman. This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

8. From henceforth official admonition by almswomen of almsmen is forbidden, whereas the official admonition of almswomen by almsmen is not forbidden. This is a rule... never to be transgressed.

(Crosby, 2014)

From the above eight strict rules it can be seen that women are under the power of masculinity and show difficulty in areas of religion because they view women as the weaker sex, but in the case of Khun Mae Chandee and Mae Chi Keaw Sianglam, Yet there are many who believe and believe that they have attained enlightenment but this is influenced by the endorsement of Luang Pu Man Bhuridatto and Luang Ta Mahabua

Nyanasampanno. This phenomenon, Bourdieu describes as cultural capital, is institutionalized. This type of grant is expressed as accredited, creating a comparison between certified and non-accredited (Bourdieu, 2002). In Buddhist societies that still uphold patriarchy, when the influential people in the society certify that women can attain enlightenment, they can build faith in the people of the society, which demonstrates a lack of concern. equal in one form of Buddhist society.

Religion for capitalism

In the case of Acharavadee Wongsakon, the person who has economic costs already gives her a lot of connections, and it is interesting that when a person has a good economic cost, people in society are ready to believe that she is a good person. which is probably influenced by the theory of King Bodhisattva (Jory, 2002). Bourdieu describes the economic capital that can generate symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2002), for which she has enough economic capital. People in society will recognize and accept their wealthy status. or in another way Individuals who are actors in society may use their own economic capital to benefit others by donating to the establishment of foundations or associations, which will allow society to recognize that person as a good person of society or a philanthropist, which is considered to create identity through economic capital to survive in capitalism.

Although Acharavadee Wongsakon

appears to have created her identity through economic capital, her claim that she can achieve enlightenment is still under patriarchy because she is a disciple of Somdej Phra Phuttacharnto. Become a Techo Vipassana that allows her to benefit economically from capitalism.

Conclusion

In Buddhist society, there are still many inequalities. Especially the role of women in this society that has not been accepted in many roles. forcing women to express other identities in order to be accepted in society. Whether it is in the form of dress that is similar to imitating the monks or attaining enlightenment that must be endorsed by famous monks. All of these things show a great deal of inequality in Buddhist society. ●

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