



OSHIMA UNIVERSITY



## HỘI THẢO KHOA HỌC QUỐC TẾ VIỄN CẢNH ĐÔNG NAM BỘ - LẦN 1, 2018 THE 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE SOUTHEAST VIETNAM OUTLOOK 2018

**PHÁT TRIỂN NGUỒN NHÂN LỰC CHẤT LƯỢNG CAO: KINH NGHIỆM CÁC QUỐC GIA  
CHÂU Á VÀ BÀI HỌC CHO VÙNG THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH**

*Developing High Quality Human Resource: Asian Experiences and  
Lesson learned for Ho Chi Minh metropolitan area*



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ASEAN Studies Centre, MCU*

## **Reflection of Learning Experience on Thai Educational System of Vietnamese Students in Buddhist University**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to study the effect of reflection on learning experiences in Thai educational system of Vietnamese students in Buddhist University. Data were collected by using related research papers, observations and interviews. The result indicated that 198 Vietnamese students who have registered in the academic year 2018, which counted from 1,424 of foreign students to study in Thai Buddhist University. Students reflected that Thailand is an important country that having a majority population paying respect in Buddhism, and it is the center of Buddhist studies. In the field of educational management, the university can operate and manage well in accordance with the mission of the university. It is also expected that the university will be the center for the study of human resource development in Buddhism, to develop a diverse educational system, and consistent with the current time. The university should provide more courses, student accommodation, scholarships, enhancing the network between Buddhist University and leading international universities. Being a center of world Buddhist educational management in a holistic way, not just for only Thai or Vietnam, are expected.

**Keywords:** Learning Experience, Thai Educational System, Buddhist University

### **Introduction**

This article was written based on the experience of conducting research on educational management in ASEAN countries called *“Trends of educational management for unity and peace of countries in ASEAN community”* (2017), and the research called *“An Instructional Model of ASEAN Cross Culture in CLMV Countries for Students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University”* (2018). Result of the study is the collection of some knowledge about holistic education. When focusing on the study of Buddhism in Thailand and Vietnam, it is similar in some respects that are the religious education in the modern form of university. In Thailand, it is managed by the Sangha education and Buddhist is the target of human resources development in both religious and social benefits for Buddhist studies and National education.

There are two Sangha Universities which are Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Mahamakut Buddhist University. These universities were established during the time of western university influence in parallel with the influence of political, economic, social and cultural influence into the region of Southeast Asia along with social development with Thailand for a long time. The Buddhist

University has organized international conferences and would like to be a Buddhist center. The number of foreign students both monks and laymen who come from Buddhist countries is interested in studying at Thai Buddhist university. It is shown in the current academic year 2018 that the overall number of students is 1,424 students, and the highest number is Myanmar which is 685 students, followed by 199 of Laos students, 196 of Vietnamese students, 133 of Cambodian students. In addition, there are the other nations such as USA, Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, Bhutan, China, England, Russia, Estonia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Srilanka Taiwan, Nepal, Malaysia, etc., that more than 200 students as shown in Figure 1.

In this article focused on the study of the attitude, opinion and expectation of Vietnamese student who come and study in the university toward educational management at Thai Buddhist University. Results will be information for considering adjusting the direction of Buddhist Studies teaching and instruction in the future. Moreover, it can be a primary data for helping to make the decision of the development to be a center of world Buddhist University or being the center of Buddhist educational management of Sangha University at the international level in the future.

### **Development of Teaching and Instruction in Thai Buddhist University**

There are two Buddhist Universities in Thailand. The first university is Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University which has established by King Chulalongkorn or King Rama V (1 October 1868 - 23 October 1910) of Rattanakosin Kingdom. He has established the Sangha Maha Nikai sect, and had given his name as the founder "Mahachula". For another university, it is Mahamakut Buddhist University that using the name of King Mongkut or King Rama VI (2 April 1851 - 1 October 1868) who was a father of King Chulalongkorn. This name was dedicated to honor him as the Dhammyuttika sect while he was ordained and to provide education for monks in Dhammyuttika sect. These two universities has shown a duty and a mission which appeared in the reserach of Phra Surin Sodharo (2015) on the titled of *"The Role of Buddhist University and the Establishment of Buddhism"* provided information on Thai Sangha education as follow:

*"Sangha Education had grown with prosperity during the reign of King Rama V. He agreed that education is very important, therefore, he had designed to make education reform. Teaching and instruction should set as other civilized countries. All people must have been studied systematically and for a novices and monks should be encouraged to study in both moral (Pariyatti-dhamma) and modern academic with high-concurrently. He has established "Mahathat Wittayalaya" since 1889. In 1896, he has given a new name called "Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya" for being the place for monks and layman to study Buddhist Studies and high academic*

*curriculum (Boonpoo, S., 2011). Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has operated and managed the course since 1947. The first faculty was Faculty of Buddhism in 1961, the 2nd was Faculty of Education and is currently developing a teaching and instruction continually. There are five faculties now which are Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Buddhism, Faculty of Social Sciences and Graduate School (Faculty of Education, 2011). The management curriculum of Buddhist Studies has shown in diverse fields. In addition, the University offers meditation courses aimed at encouraging the students to know and understand thoroughly Pariyat, practice the doctrines of Buddhism by undergraduate students must be enrolled in the course is compulsory and must comply with the regulations of the Mahachulalongkorn rajavidyalaya University to practice meditation for 10 days per year in training until the end of the course. Practice of meditation is the heart of Buddhism that Buddhists should understand the essence of Buddhism truly."*

Kaentao, H. (2015) has conducted research called "The Development of the Roles of State Buddhist University for Supporting ASEAN Community", and the researcher has proposed the result indicated as follow:

*"The Roles of State Buddhist University disciplines in implementing 5 missions of the university to support ASEAN can be developed by producing graduates students, improve teaching quality and standards, the promotion of research and development body of knowledge from research to enhance international Buddhism, the academic services of religious into communities and societies in both national and international level, to support Buddhism and culture, and to managed using good governance. In producing graduates should have relied on the identity with a role of model for the society and ASEAN community. For the research aspect, it should promote research and development of knowledge to enhance their research utilization by applying Buddhist principles emphasized both Thailand and ASEAN. For the academic services, university has developed and proposed Buddhist academic to the community society and nation in order to have international development as a center of academic services for society and ASEAN. For the development of Buddhism and cultural art, university should support and integrate between Thai and ASEAN cultural art. For the management of good governance, university has developed a model for the management to raise the university into the world standard."*

Therefore, the development of the Buddhist University and the role of university are to set educational management for human development on Buddhist Studies in Thailand. The pattern of educational disciplines of these two universities is the development of Sangha educational disciplines that came with the same time as the colonial Western that effected to many countries in the world and Southeast Asia like Thailand needed to adapt in various fields such as politics, economy, society, culture and education. Even these two Buddhist Universities had the evidence of mission in education, but at the same time trying to disseminate Buddhism. Moreover, universities are the part of strengthening of holistic Buddhism such as the event of organizing Buddhist leader, networking meetings between religious sects in order to encourage learning during universities and religious sects in the country including educational management for collaborative in learning Buddhist Studies.

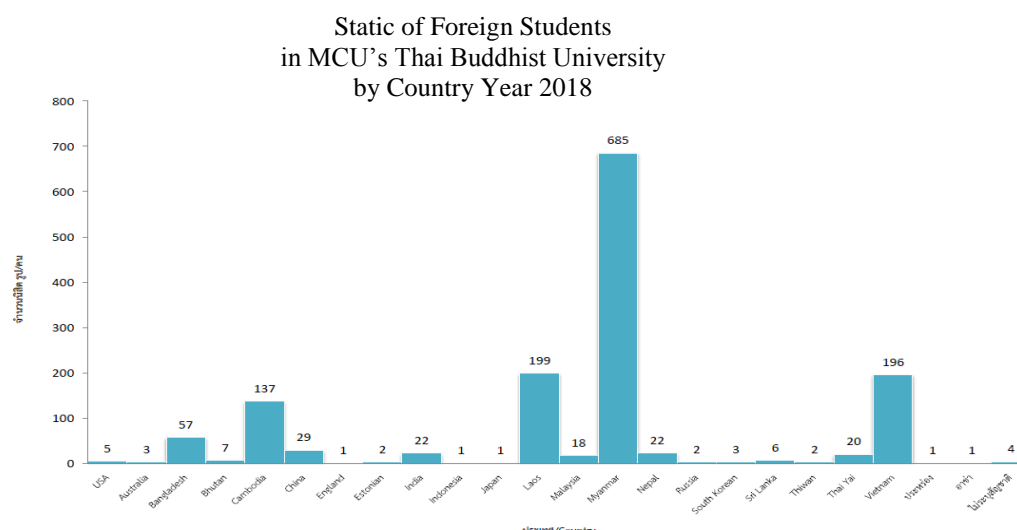
### **Development of the University to be a Center of World Buddhist Education**

The concept or principle of Buddhist University has determined and announced themselves to be a center of world Buddhism. This is the important concept that the university has reflected and led to self-development under the possibility and the cause of development. The Buddhist University has held the meeting of senior leadership of Buddhism and other religions such as Interfaith Dialogue of Religious Leaders for Peace in ASEAN Community (Editorial Team, 2014: 110-115), The 1<sup>st</sup> leadership conference on Religions for Peace in ASEAN community on “religious toleration”. There were 10 the religious leaders from 10 ASEAN countries, including 500 people from Thailand to join in the conference at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Wang Noi, Ayutthaya. According to the announcement concept of being the center of the world Buddhist University, it made Buddhism in Thailand is an important part in the field of education and the important mission of providing education to the development of Buddhism in the country. The rapid expansion of university disciplines to adapt themselves to the study and at the same time adapt to religious education as well as preparing faculty staffs to support education in the importance of education in a holistic way as well.

### **The International and the Center of Buddhist Education**

The University has established strategy and mission of being the center of the world Buddhist education. The movement of educational management is set and is different from the original system that aims to Buddhist groups and foreign students. It has developed a course in English and provided personnel the opportunity to study abroad as professional development by encourage them to study foreign languages especially English. Therefore, administrators and faculty staff were sent to study at the university in England, India and Sri Lanka. The knowledge of English efficiency is essential to support students who study international program as shown the increase number of international students who come and study in Thailand. The majority of

students come from countries where Buddhism is the main religion which are Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other countries where people are Buddhists. He studied Buddhism in the Buddhist University in the amount of the increase. The statistics of international student from abroad in the year 2018 is showed as figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Statistic of Vietnamese Student in MCU which more than 1400 students from many Countries (Source: Registration Affair of MCU, Year 2018)

From figure 1, the statistics of students in the year 2018 showed that a total number of international students is 1,424 students from 21 countries that paying respect in Buddhism from all over the world. There are 196 Vietnamese students who have registered by studying various courses in both Thai and English curriculum, both undergraduate and graduate school. The number of undergraduate is 151 students enrolled in courses and 5 students in Thai course, 31 of Master degree and 8 students in Thai course, 14 students of PhD program and 1 student in Thai course. There are 161 Buddhist monks and male, whereas 35 students are female and nun who are enrolled in a course in English program from Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Buddhism and International Buddhist Studies College, in various disciplines such as Buddhist Psychology, Comparative Religion, English, Linguistics, Philosophy, Public Administration, Tipitaka Studies, Vipassana Meditation, Buddhist Educational Administration, Buddhist Studies, Buddhism, Mahayana Studies and Religions.

Most of the courses is English courses that the university provides for international students in order to develop both English language and Buddhist Studies. There are only a few of the students who study in Thai courses because they need to



learn Thai language. For English courses, the University Language Center has organized an English proficiency test for them and all courses in the university aim to share learning and cultural adaptation including the encouragement of adaptation skill. More than 1,000 of foreign students who are studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University have recognized and opened mind in terms of ethnicity, culture, language and religious words in order to adjust themselves to live together in a different dimension and background of each country.



**Figure 2:** Interviews Nguyen Vaw Nam and Vietnamese Students in Buddhist University, Thailand (Source: MCU, 19 October 2018)

From figure 2, the author met and interviewed Vietnamese students in many of the interview schedules and to explore about students' experience of learning in Thai Buddhist University. Data were analyzed and reflected university executive teams and lecturers in order to find the medium way of supporting each other between Thai Buddhists and international Buddhists following goals and mission of the university that having Buddhist education management in Thailand.



**Figure 3:** Observation and interviews Vietnamese students studying in Buddhist University, Thailand on the aspects of attitude, cross-cultural learning and learning adaptation. (Source: MCU, 8 October 2018)

From figure 3, the author had interviewed and observed Vietnamese students who studying at Buddhist University. There are the aspects of living, eating, accommodation, way of life, adaptation under a new social model that different from their own culture and tradition such as food, taste of food, and type of food including interaction and views of religious values and the image of the dress. A cultural language is the learning, and another is the adaption under the new culture within the university. These circumstances and conditions is the way of learning into understanding and lead to an adjustment under the new situation to encourage a social sharing of society for students of the University in Thailand. The cooperative between students who have difference respect in Buddhism which are Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, are occurred. It is a mechanism incorporated in the Buddhist University in Thailand under educational management for being a center of international Buddhism.

### **The reflection of Vietnamese Students from Sangha University with Learning Experiences in Thai Educational System**

From the interviews of Vietnamese students, they reflected their own experience during studying at Buddhist University in Thailand on the aspects of studying, living and lifestyle, culture and tradition including the suggestion for further development. It was shown as below details:

*(A) On the aspect of studying study, students have learned most have a good attitude toward education and religion. They have seen Thailand showed and promoted Buddhism and continually increase. The most important thing is that Vietnam has gain Buddhist graduation scholars who returned to Vietnam. Then, they have communicated to each other which related to the number of students increases each year according to statistics from the university.*

*(B) On the aspect of living and lifestyle, the university has provided them of living, encourages learning and adaptation under the new culture and thinking and emerging the significant power of learning Buddhism.*

*(C) On the aspect of culture and tradition, university provided cross-cultural learning for adaptation. Result from participatory observation indicated that Vietnamese students are vegetarian and the university has provided them food for breakfast and lunch. According to the research, Saraban, S. (2015) has conducted research on "A Study of Education Preparation for ASEAN Community of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Result showed that the university should prepare educational management for the ASEAN community such as prepare action plans at policy level, set goals, how to implement educational programs in both undergraduate professor*



*teaching evaluation and assessment in accordance with the concept of an ASEAN Community on three pillars under the philosophy of “One Vision, One identity and One Community”. This reflected together with Vietnamese students coming to study at Thai Buddhist University in the field that are part of their learning and cross-cultural adaptation for the future.*

*(D) On the aspect of the concept of development, they reflected that the university has improved a diverse curriculum such as setting field trips to learn Buddhism from Thailand, development of a variety of education consistent with the current time. University has also provided the course including accommodation, scholarships and network between international Buddhist University and leading universities at international level in order to be a center of world Buddhist education.*

### **Results of Vietnamese Students to Create Body of Knowledge on Vietnamese Studies in Thailand**

The students who come and study in Thailand have developed the body of knowledge relating to Vietnamese Studies through the studying in graduate school. There are many Vietnamese to create and develop knowledge from conducted research on Vietnam context. These research finding reflected knowledge about Buddhism from Vietnam and then bring into Thailand and other countries. Many research papers have conducted and completed as showed in the work of Huynh Kim Lan (2010) who has conducted research on “*Theravada Buddhism in Vietnam*”, Ven. Dao Minh Van (2017) has conducted research on “*The Theravāda Buddhist Education System in Southern Vietnam and Its Contribution to the Society (Buddhist Studies)*”, Phra Huynh Minh Thuan (Bhikkhu Santadatta) has conducted research on “*Theravāda Upasampadā in Vietnam: A Study based on Vinaya Perspective*”, Phan Tai Thuc (Ven. Thích Tâm Thức) (2017) conducted research on “*The Practical of Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Society: A Case Study of Hoang Phap Monastery in Vietnam*”, including the research of Phan Tai Thuc (Ven. Thích Tâm Thức) (2017) on “*The Practical of Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Society: A Case Study of Hoang Phap Monastery in Vietnam*”.

All research involves the study of Buddhism in Vietnam which saw the Vietnamese monks to study at Buddhist University to create a body of knowledge on area studies of Vietnam for Thai education and academic development. In addition, Ven. Tran Duy Hieu. (2008) conducted research on “*A study of Annam-Nikaya in Thailand*”. Even this studying has conducted by Vietnamese student and studies on Buddhist sects in Thailand, it is shown the connection of Vietnamese Buddhism in Thailand into the Vietnamese Buddhist community about the knowledge in Buddhism. Vietnam has also received the knowledge of Buddhism based on area

studies of Vietnam as well. Thai Buddhist University has also created social, religious, human resources of Vietnamese people to bring back the knowledge to develop Buddhism in Vietnam according to the holistic vision and mission of the university. It will be very useful to communicate knowledge of Buddhism from Vietnam to the public or to extend education on Buddhism into the international community in the form of written communication, the development of research project following the university curriculum.



Figure 4: Students are encouraged learn ASEAN cross culture learning through Area studies in Vietnam.

(Source: ASEAN Studies Centre, MCU, 13 September 2018)



**Figure 5:** Interview Prof. Dr. Le Manh That, Vice President, Vietnam Buddhist University on the aspects of Buddhist Studies in Vietnam and trend of encouragement Vietnamese students who are studying in Thai Buddhist University. (Source: Ho Chi Minh, 10 November 2017)

In figure 4-5, it is shown that the development of university education which has been trying to enhance learning and sharing on across boundaries to education as a common culture in order to present Buddhism in Vietnam and Thailand. The author is an executive in ASEAN Studies Centre and conducts the research in ASEAN region has organized and developed the activity particularly on

the issues of religious and cultural activities to encourage students to attend and exchange of learning experiences in the areas of culture and religion in Vietnam. For the development of knowledge, the University has fostered and prepared Thai students to learn about Vietnam and Vietnamese students to learn about Thailand in order to study exchange experience from each other. In terms of the development of an adaptation mechanism under shared management, both Thai and Vietnamese students have the opportunity to learn and do cooperative activities that will lead to the relationship of the states between Vietnam and Thailand. It is the creation that has been happening for Vietnamese students and Thai students to share knowledge and experience in the form of cross-cultural learning including comparative religion and culture as well.

### **Conclusion**

The reflection of direct experience from Vietnamese students (198 students) who are studying in Thai Buddhist universities indicated that Thailand is the center of Buddhist studies and the majority of the population is Buddhist. The expectation of students who have registered and studied in the university showed that most of them expect the university should be play the central role of human development in Buddhism. It is will be a best practice if the university is able to increase education to accommodate a variety of technological, economic, social and cultural support to the changes that occur from time to time such as curriculum and scholarship. Both internal and external network are connected between Buddhist universities and has been conducting continually in order to lead the Buddhist University to reach at the international level, and to encourage the center of Buddhism in the Buddhist community. It is a tool and a mechanism for education sharing and indicating the direction of the management or studying Buddhism in the future. Buddhist University is expected to promote human resource development in Buddhism as well as bringing knowledge to serve the development of student's home countries. The most important aspect is the collaborative learning is conducted between Buddhist University both in Thailand and Vietnam and learning Buddhism should be unity within the diversity. Therefore, this article is to explore the ideas and expectations of the management in university through the narrative of Vietnamese students who live on campus as student or monks in Thailand. The result is related to language learning, cultural adaptation, so students can take the knowledge back to their communities, societies and country. For the university will search for the guideline for the development including mechanism, curriculum, and overall educational management in order to develop the university to reach the strategy that correlate to the real situation and the target of holistic Buddhist education system.

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## Interview

- Interview Venerable Nguyen Hoang Vu. Student of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 19 October 2018.
- Interview Venerable Nguyen Tuong Trinh. Student of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 19 October 2018.

Interview Venerable Nguyen Van Nam. Student of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 19 October 2018.

Interview Venerable Nguyen Duy Trong. Student of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 19 October 2018.

Interview Venerable Tran Ngoc Duy. Student of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 19 October 2018.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

**Phra Rajvaramethi, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D.,** Vice-Rector for Administration and Acting Director of ASEAN Studies Centre, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. Graduated in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Philosophy, University of Madras, India and received Scholarship from India Government ( UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION: U.G.C.). Current address is Wat Prayurawongsawas Warawihan, Khaeng Wat Kalaya, Thonburi, Bangkok 10600. He also serves the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand as Secretary to the President of Sangha Council Region 2 and the Vice-Abbot of Wat Prayurawongsawas. Over 2 decades, he took a leading role in organizing the International Cerebration on the Occasion of United Nation Day of Vesak to advocate Dhamma applications and sufficiency practices. Phra Rajvaramethi is the author, coauthor or editor of more than 100 books, including Buddhist Ethics in the World of Impermanence and Life History and Achievements of Phra Upalikunupramajarn. His recent work focuses on ASEAN related issues. As Acting Director of ASEAN Studies Center, he is conducting an international research on the Development of Integrated Buddhist ASEAN Curriculum in Thailand and CLMV Countries funded by Thailand Research Fund (TRF) and Buddhist Research Institute of MCU.

### **Curriculum Vitae (Presenter)**

**Dr.Lampong Klomkul** is a researcher and director for research, information and academic services, ASEAN Studies Centre, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. She Graduated in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Educational Research Methodology, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She received award from National Research Council of Thailand: The best dissertation of year 2013 in Good Level (Education Field), received Graduate Scholar Award from The Nineteenth International Conference on Learning, The Institute of Education University of London, London, UK, August 14-16, 2012. She also received Golden Jubilee Scholarship to study in Canada for two years in Bachelor degree from 1997-1999. She is interested in conducting classroom action research, and to conduct research on teacher's development. In addition, she is interested in conducting research on applied Buddhist Studies into education and culture in ASEAN Community.

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# **HỘI THẢO KHOA HỌC QUỐC TẾ** **VIỄN CẢNH ĐÔNG NAM BỘ - LẦN 1, 2018** **THE 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE** **SOUTHEAST VIETNAM OUTLOOK 2018**

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