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PHRA MAHA SOMCHAI IAM-SA-ARD : THE COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF EXEMPLARY ROLES OF THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN SOLVING
SOCIAL PROBLEMS : A CASE STUDY OF TEMPLES IN BANGKOK AND
THE CENTRAL AREA. THESIS ADVISORS : PARICHART SUWANBUBPHA,
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The objective of this thesis is to study the roles of exemplary developed Buddhist Temples in helping society, concerning the Temples in Bangkok and the Central Area. The researcher divided the case study into two parts as follows, of which one is the research of the papers and documents in the Buddhist Temple during the ancient time of the Buddha until the modern times, and the other is through field study by official questionnaire-interviewing; resulting in the evidence of the roles of the Buddhist Temples in Bangkok and Central Area as an exemplary status. The findings of this study show that the Buddhist Temple already had a special role in helping society since the ancient Buddhist era. During the historic times of Buddha, the Buddhist Temples had a significant role in assisting spiritual development; and this role continues until the present days, but with necessary changes to suit the modern age.

The results of the field study in case of the exemplary developed Temples in Bangkok and outer area of Bangkok, and other in the Central area of Thailand shows, that the 12 Temples put the stress on the development of architectural constructions, cleanliness of the surroundings and the separation of the monk living area, the ceremonial area and the area available for the public, distinctively.

Referring to the role of providing social assistance, the Temples in Bangkok and in the rural areas can be seen as having similar tasks, which involve spiritual development, education and social welfare. The difference between the Temples in Bangkok and the Rural Temples depend on the size Larger Temples have more activities than smaller ones. The main roles are to concentrate on spiritual development, education and social assistance.

Concerning the problems and obstacles that arise in the process of working, the research shows that the obstacles of the twelve developed exemplary Temples are of a similar kind; such as lack of financial means for support and capable working staff for a successful work performance.

In order that the temples can undertake their various important activities successfully, the Department of Religious Matters should seriously support the development and strengthening of the temple's roles.