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PRAMAHAVICHIAN SAISRI : BUDDHISM AND HONORIFIC RANKS : A CASE
STUDY OF BUDDHIST SCHOLARS AND STUDENT MONKS' ATTITUDES IN HIGHER
EDUCATION. THESIS ADVISORS : TAVIVAT PUNTARIGVIVAT, PH.D., SARINTIP
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This is qualitative research. The purpose of this research is to study about the
honorific ranks in Buddhism in Thailand. It is comprised of both documents and field
study using a questionnaire for Buddhist monks currently in higher education and interviews
with the Buddhist scholars on attitudes of honorific ranks.

The results of document research show that honorific ranks were started in
the Buddha period, and were called *Atatatkha*. These positions were given to various
honorable expert disciples. In Thailand, The honorific ranks began in the Sukhothai period
and were given to the knowledgeable monks in the King Ram Kam Haeng Era for monastic
execution. During Ayuthaya, Thonburi, and early Rattanakosin periods, this system was
adopted and changed. It was clearly developed in the King Rama Six Era. At present, the
honorific ranks in Buddhism has supported the monastic administration .

The results of field research show that the honorific ranks were the ranks of
decorations which the king had given to Buddhist monks for the monastic administration.
These ranks show the relationship between the institution of the king and the Sangha
institution. These ranks are considered as the mediator between good and bad depending
on the involved persons who accept this position. The fame associated with this position
could lead to the wrong practice. So, the consideration of honorific ranks should be
amended strictly according to the doctrine. The suitable honorific ranks should be clear
and adjudge and truly benefit religion and society for all more than anyone or any
group's own benefit. This will be the great benefit to Buddhism.