

Thesis Title	The Role of Buddhist Monks in Youth Socialization : A Case Study of Moral Camp at Wat Umong, Chiang Mai Province	
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Abstract

This thesis was set out to examine socialization processes utilized by Buddhist monks in training youth at the morality camp run by Wat Umong or Umong Temple in Chiang Mai Province. In addition, it also probed social, economic and educational background of youth undergoing the training as well as their and their parents' expectations. The study employed the qualitative research methodology in collecting needed data, i.e., interviewing, observing and participating in training activities. Data sources comprised directly involved monks, youth who had undergone the training, teachers of schools sending youth to train and parents of trainees.

The study found that social, economic and educational background, e.g., youngsters' domicile or their schools' location, did have an impact upon their expectations and reactions prior to the training. Those youngsters with nonurban domicile and schools' location exhibited positive thoughts and attitudes as regards camp attendance. This was so because they had had opportunities meeting and interacting with monks as well as establishing good ties with temples. The similar finding was found as regards those youngsters whose families had educated and socialized them to have faith in Buddhism and appreciate the role of Buddhist monks. Although

they lived in urban areas, this particular group of youth still exhibited positive attitudes towards camp attendance. On the other hand, those youngsters with urban base and less exposure to or fewer interactions with Buddhism or Buddhist monks tended to exhibit rather negative thoughts and attitudes.

Moreover, male students were found to be less interested in the training than their female counterparts. Post-training situation, however, were surprisingly interesting. It was found that regardless of the above background, sexes, levels of education or types of environment, trained youngsters emerged with noticeably altered perspectives and behaviors in a more desirable direction. Their learning (from the training) was in no way hindered by such factors.

As regards the training processes adopted by the monks in the morality training it was found that they were of both direct and indirect nature. The former took the forms of lecturing, instructing or sermonizing as well as various learning techniques. The latter, on the other hand, relied on the camp's own strict rules and regulations stipulating operational guidelines and steps to be strictly followed and prohibitions with tight supervision and control. However, the training curriculum was quite flexible taking into consideration trainees' needs and conditions as well as social circumstances. Curriculum contents were designed to simultaneously and symmetrically develop the trainees physically, intellectually and emotionally in order for them to derive learning-oriented wisdom and, subsequently, morally proper behaviors ultimately expected by the training. Underlying the training philosophy and ideology were the beliefs that every human being wanted and had potentiality to learn to develop him/herself if accorded opportunities; favorable learning processes were capable of changing behavior; productive and meaningful learning was possible under atmosphere and circumstances conducive to learning; morality learning, in particular, was possible when natural circumstances and contrived rules and regulations went hand in hand both in theory and practice.

One the other hand, the underlying ideology of the camp revolved around efforts to project the image of Buddhist monks as a socially responsible one with the hope of reviving and revitalizing the socially, ethically and morally leading role of Buddhist monks and, ultimately, regaining the public respect and recognition.