

The objective of this research is an analytical study of 3 grounds for accomplishing merit (Puññakiriyā-vaṭṭhu 3 ; Dhāna, Sila and Bhāvanā) among Thai Buddhist Farmers and Factory workers in the Newly Industrialized communities. It is a case study in Klongluang district of Patumthani Province.

With the establishment of an industrialized zone in Klong-laung district, several changes have occurred, in traditional Buddhist culture and faith particularly with respect to Buddhism.

From the field research, the findings indicated that giving (dāna) in religious institutions(such as giving to monks on -

almsround), giving monastary donations and performing social work for society among farmers and factory workers are considerably low. There are 70 % of farmers and 72 % of factory workers give alms to monks only once a year, 20 % of farmers and 26 % of factory workers have never given alms. The reason given is the limited amount of almsgiving. 64 % of farmers and 90 % of factory workers claimed to have insufficient spare time to give alms to monks on almsround. There are 80 % of farmers and 64 % of factory workers donating at neighbourhood funerals and ordinations in preference to other forms of donaion or good works in society.

On the point of the adherence and attitudes for observing the 5 precepts(Sīla), 38 % of farmers shares the view that keeping the 1st precept is the hardest while, on the contrary, 64 % of factory employees holds the view that keeping the 4th precept is hardest. There are 82 % of farmers and 90 % of factory workers state that the 3rd precept is the easiest. However, from the direct observation of their behavior, the majority of those people pay no earnest interest in keeping all the precepts. There are 80 % of farmers and 100 % of factory workers have never taken the precepts at the temple.

When examining practice of meditation [Bhāvanā] (such as chanting, paying respect to the Buddha and sitting meditation), it is indicated that 70 % of farmers and 86 % of factory workers never perform chanting before bed and there is only 30 % of farmers and 14 % of factory workers who actually perform chanting even on an irregular basis. Only 56 % of farmers and 66 % of factory workers

think that meditation could help to rid the mind of defilements.

90 % of farmers and 98 % of factory workers have never even tried meditation.

The changes mentioned above have affected the lifestyle of local people, especially for those employed in industry, reducing the opportunity to give alms or perform other sorts of merit to almost non existence. Free time from work such as weekends (but almost non-existent for farmers) is usually spent on pursuing various forms of entertainment or going outing rather than participating in religious activities. The latter is often considered too difficult and this discourages people from making merit in the temple. Failing to keep the precepts and meditate, chant and pay respect to the Buddha, these people have become more distanced from the temple. Consequently, the relationship of the people to the religion is much less close.