

Thesis Title            A Comparative Study of the Social Role of Wat and Public Welfare Department in Relation to Assistance Programs for Orphans and Poor Children: A Case Study of Wat Srakaew in Angthong Province and Children Reception Home in Nonthaburi Province.

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#### ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to present a comparative study of the principles and role of Buddhist monasteries and Public Welfare Department concerning helping orphans and poor children. It is also a study of the difficulties in implementing their activities and how the two organizations have solved their problems. In its findings, the thesis suggests some practical ideas in assisting these activities to be more successful.

The documentary research focuses on the general idea of social services, Buddhist teachings on social services, the roles of Buddhist monasteries and the Public Welfare Department in helping orphans and poor children, and the situation of orphans in Thai society.

The field research is being done at the Srakaew monastery Angthong province, and the Pakkred Welfare Home for Orphan Boys, Nonthaburi province. Its methods are interviewing and observation. The research gives details about how the two organizations have helped orphans and poor children. The results of these two organizational efforts are studied through observing various aspects of development of these children's lives. Ninety-four children from the Monastery and ninety boys from the Department were observed.

The field research finds that Srakaew Monastery, in the private sector, has shared the responsibility with the government, i.e. the Public Welfare Department, in helping orphans and poor children. The Monastery has implemented its activities in an "unofficial" form. Without the government's support, the Monastery's work has been carried out largely by donations of faithful people. The Monastery's services are similar to those of the Department. But its services are limited in funds, manpower and knowledge of organizing and managing. Moreover, the Monastery has accepted too many children and has gone over its capacity to serve. This becomes the barrier to effective service of the Monastery.

The field research finds that the entering children of the Srakaew Monastery are poorer than those of the Public Welfare Department. But both groups entering children are in good health. After receiving the two organizations' services, however, children of the Department are better off than those of the Monastery in matters of nutrition, clothing and lodging. Nevertheless children in both groups showed a surprisingly large and increasing degree of ill health.

Children of the Monastery and the Department receive formal education and vocational training according to their ages and abilities. In vocational training, they have learned about music, metal work, haircutting, sewing and manuscript composition. But the training programs of the Department are more practical than those of the Monastery.

The urgent need of Sra-Kaew Monastery is to implement social services more efficiently. This should be done by limiting the number of children joining its activities. The Monastery's work should be planned and organized to rely on its own limited resources. The urgent need of Public Welfare Department is to increase its services to a larger number of orphan and poor children.