

Thesis Title                      Buddhism and Economy : A Case Study on  
Economic ideas of Buddhist Devotees of  
Wat Phradhammakaya and Santi Asoke  
Buddhist Center.  
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to study economic ideas of the devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya and Santi Asoke Buddhist Center. The project of the research is divided into two parts as follows: Documentary research and Field research. The documentary research is based on study of the essence of Buddhism especially concerning parts of economy and the history and philosophy of Wat Phradhammakaya and Santi Asoke Buddhist Center as well as the main teachings of these centers which are adapted from the Pali canon (Tipitaka) for the purpose of spreading Buddhism. The field research is based on interview and questionnaires given to 100 devotees practising Dhamma at each center aiming at getting reliable information about economic ideas of the devotees of the two centers.

The documentary research indicates that the principles concerning economy are available in Buddhism and that should be observed by the Buddhists applying them (those economic principles) to their livelihoods. The principle of economy is classified into two levels in Buddhism namely ordinary level and extraordinary level. In ordinary level, the perseverance, diligence and savings are the key factors of improvement of one's economic condition. In extraordinary level, consciousness, wisdom and continence are the main factors of achievement of economic happiness. Buddhism, moreover, indicates that the spiritual property (Āriyasāp) is more valuable than that of material property. The Buddhist principles of economy is also divided into two parts i.e. mental and material economies. Material economy is necessary for survival, and therefore, Buddhism indicates that one should be active and diligent in his livelihood in order to earn income, and at the same time, he must know how to keep savings for the future. Mental economy is necessary for upgrading one's life (controlling his boundless desire).

The field research indicates that most of those who practise Dhamma at Wat Phradhammakaya and Santi Asoke Buddhist Center are females. Most of those who practise Dhamma at Wat Phradhammakaya are younger than that of those who practise at Santi Asoke Buddhist Center. The majority of devotees of the two centers found are university students. Most devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya are employees of private companies; while most of those who are devotees of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center are

government officers. The average monthly income of devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya ranges from 2,001 to 3,500 Baht, and of devotees of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center is 2,000 Baht. The finding also indicates that most devotees of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center are seriously interested in Buddhist principles for more than 8 years, whereas, most devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya are interested in the same for 3-4 years. The ideas of the devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya is that the present economic condition of the general public is good; but the ideas of the devotees of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center is that the condition is bad. Both groups, however, share the similar view that the main factor of the present economic problem is individual selfishness. It is also found in the field research that most of those who practise Dhamma at Wat Phradhammakaya are facing more economic problems than that of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center. The main economic problem of devotees of the two centers is insufficient income. Regarding this economic hardship, the devotees of Wat Phradhammakaya are keen on solving their economic problems by keeping balance in income and expenditure. But the devotees of Santi Asoke Buddhist Center are determined to solve their economic problems by increasing income through right livelihood with keeping balance in income and expenditure as well as savings for the future.