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Thesis Title	Aids Problems and the Thai Sangkha Institution : A Case Study of the Buddhist Monks' and Academicians' Attitudes Toward HIV Infection of the People Wishing to Enter the Monkhood
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### Abstract

This thesis attempts to survey a general perspective of 100 monks and academicians on infection of HIV virus of people intending to enter the monkhood, aspects relating to ordination, and AIDS problem spreading over the country presently, as well as monks' role in their attempts, being carried out at various temples, to help solve the problem.

This research was undertaken during the period of May to August, 1995. The samples comprise 25 preceptors, 25 academic monks, 25 graduate monks from both Buddhist universities, as well as 25 academicians from state universities and the Red Cross. The research was conducted via questionnaires, comprising both close-ended and open-ended questions to allow the respondents chances to support their opinions.

The research findings are summarized below :

1. On examination of HIV virus of those to enter the monkhood, 83% of the respondents agree in principle to add measures to ensure qualifications of people wishing to get ordained that they are absolutely clean from the disastrous epidemic. The supports are that monks are a special group of people who should devote themselves as society's spiritual leaders, so they need readiness both physically and mentally. 10% of the respondents are not sure about the idea to have the measures. The other 7% are against the idea, explaining

that people infected with HIV virus are still sufficiently healthy to conduct religious ceremonies, and they would not cause any impact on public faith as they still have no visible symptoms. They think ordinations should be allowed if the AIDS patients have strong faith in religion, and also suggest that only ordinations of fully-grown-AIDS patients should be forbidden.

2. Concerning monks' role on helping AIDS patients presently conducted at various temples, 86% of the respondents give answers supporting the activities because they see monks' potential to lift the AIDS patients mentally. The assistance can be done by adapting religious doctrines into their preachings for AIDS prevention among the general public as well as AIDS patients in the final stage, in order to make the patients themselves, their families and relatives realise the truth of life. Meanwhile, monks engaged in projects helping AIDS patients can be considered as contributing to social development and unburdening the state's responsibilities. Besides, they could make known the value of the monk institution on Thai society. Meanwhile, the finding records 6% of respondents who are not sure about the idea, and 8% of those disagreeing with the idea. The disagreements were supported by the explanations that monks should make their original role their priority, and that monks are not sufficiently educated and experienced about AIDS, as well as that public health personnel have been taking care of the problem, both in public and private hospitals, with supporting budget allocated by the government.

3. On the issue concerning the inclusion of AIDS into the five disastrous epidemics stated in the Vinaya (disciplinary rules, a division of the Buddhist cannon), 79% of the respondents consider that AIDS is like the five disastrous epidemics - leprosy, boils, dry leprosy, fit and consumption - during the Buddha's period in that AIDS still cannot be cured. This is to prevent the disease from spreading among monks and to avoid the monk's burden to look after those infected. The Thai Sangkha Institution should, therefore, have clear measures concerning rejection of AIDS patients from entering the monkhood, or campaigns paralleling to the government's launch on fighting AIDS, as well as making the issues publicly announced. 10% of the respondents cannot make definite comments on this question. The other 17% argue the move, giving a reason that monks do not need to panic over AIDS problem as it is still limited to outside the monastery

society. Moreover, it is impossible in practice to include AIDS inspection in the examination process for the five epidemics in those wishing to enter the monkhood. However, they agree with the move to add AIDS as one among the five serious epidemics if necessary.