

Thesis Title A Comparative Study of the Conservation of Water
in Buddhism and Christianity : A Case Study of Religious
Leaders at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist
University and Saengtham College.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to compare the conservation of water in Buddhism with that in Christianity. The study is conducted among religious leaders at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University and Saengtham College. The thesis is composed of documentary research and field research. The documentary research was based on the Tripitaka and the Bible and was conducted among religious leaders at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University during May-June 1994 and Saengtham College during July-August 1994. The data were collected from the 100 sets of questionnaire from each university, and from observations and interviews. The findings of the research are as follows:

Findings from the documentary research convey the conservation of water in Buddhism and Christianity. Religious leaders at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University agree that the principles found appropriate for the conservation of water at present are as follows : moral shame and dread principle (Hiri Othoppa): 88%, the moderate

consumption principle (Bhochane mutthonyuta): 89%. the non-violence principle (Ahingsa): 76%, and the forbidden trade principle (Mitchavanitcha): 81%. Moreover, the sangha morality principle in Buddhism practised routinely by the monks helps promote the image of the water conservation in Buddhism.

In studying the Christian documents, we have found that Christian leaders at Sangtham College convey their opinions regarding the Christian principles suitable for water conservation at present as follows : the love principle: 86%, the Ten Commandments: 68%, and the repentance: 60%. Besides, Christian traditions and other religious rituals help promote the water conservation in Christianity.

The main features of water conservation in both religions are not different. The two groups of leaders have tried to set themselves as examples and to distribute those doctrines they find useful for the conservation of water. The activities conducted by them can be divided as follows: lecturing: 13% for the Buddhist group, 5% for the Christian group, preaching: 20% for the Buddhist group, 5% for the Christian group, teaching in small classes: 42% for the Buddhist group, 8% for the Christian group, presenting papers: 3% for the Buddhist group, 8% for the Christian group, and other types of activities: 2% for the Buddhist group, 8% for the Christian group respectively.

One of the most important findings from the research is that the religious leaders of both groups agree that, in general, social problems affect the sangha institution in terms of the four basic factors. Furthermore, they also have an impact on human mental

conditions and social behaviors. Religious institutions, as parts of society, should play a vital role in guiding society. For this reason, religious institutions and religious leaders should be responsible for solving social problems. This is one of the practices which help society do away with suffering in order to achieve beneficial conditions and mutual peace.

Consequently, the comprehensive study of the conservation of water in Buddhism and Christianity plays an important role in motivating the public and responding the present condition of water conservation. The study also demonstrates the love and the treatment of nature and environment within the consciousness of love, kindness, and non-violence.