

The Development of Environmental Management Indicators for Buddhist Temples

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Abstract

The development of factors and indicators of the environmental management for temples is another way to promote and support the knowledge and understanding about environmental issues occurring in present society which involves the environment in temples and also communities. There have been many factors which cause those environmental issues, both intentionally and unintentionally. Therefore, temples, communities, educational institutes, local administrative organizations, Sub-district (Tambon) Public Health Offices, private organizations, and other agencies have to participate in the environmental development in temples for the benefits of monks and the people who come to get benefits in temples and communities.

Index terms— development, indicators, environmental management, buddhist temples, environmental promotion.

1 Introduction

The present world has been rapidly changed from the past. The massive flow of western culture in the era of globalization has swooped countries around the world unavoidably. This has caused changes to ways of life in different levels of society starting from the levels of family, community, culture and tradition. These historical roots of society have been modified according to the fashion. The small society with kindness and sharing has been changed to big society which combines all cultures together. This matter seems to be scary if there is no any good way to manage and serve these changes. Especially, there has been a lot of fighting for limited natural resources which are not sufficient for the future needs. This will cause many problems afterward. One more issue is that, at present, natural resources and the environment have been critically destroyed to meet the requirements of humans who have more needs other than those four common needs. This dramatically phenomenon has caused the reduced numbers of trees, plants and animals. It also causes the problems of soil deterioration, water shortage, pollutions, wastes and changes of climate conditions in atmosphere which very much vary, global warming, and unbalanced ecological system.

Thai society is a society with respect of Buddhism and 95% of population is Buddhists. Buddhism is a religion with an emphasis on teaching humans with appropriate way of life, and without luxury and shortages which lead to troubles. This way is then considered to be an important approach to practice and related to way of life in Thai society. It is also a good model for practice from generation to generation and compared as a shield to protect or delay the mental and environmental deteriorations or the morals toward the environment. With this significance, Lord Buddha then set regulations for monks to practice as a model for reducing the use of excessive factors or resources other than those four common needs. The Dharma disciplines have been used as criteria or regulations established.

The factors and indicators obtained from the development have covered physical and biological environment, well being of the monks, and the involvement of people to promote and support the environmental management and to look after well being of the monks. The implementations of these factors and indicators depend upon the

1 INTRODUCTION

44 context and potential of each temple. They allow temples to have appropriate environmental management and
45 promote sustainable management of the environment. They are, for example, knowing to estimate amount of
46 offered food to be consumed, considering appropriate food, using limited number of sarongs and blankets, living
47 in safe places, considering herbs for direct treatments, and establishing regulations for study and do & don't
48 practices for monks and nuns as priesthood.

49 National Office of Buddhism established regulations for the development of temples to meet the determined
50 standards. Temples should have roles to do the functions and arrange activities. The abbots and the temple
51 committee must have modern management system for temples. Information technology should be brought to
52 use for data collection. The management of a temple should provide opportunity to community to get involved.
53 The purposes of these regulations are: 1) to be guidelines to develop temples according to the standards of
54 National Office of Buddhism; 2) to facilitate the operations with highest efficiency and effectiveness, and the
55 same standards; 3) to establish standards for fundamental development for temples leading to the operations of
56 temples' activities determined by National Office of Buddhism (education park in temple, and good developed
57 temple with outstanding performance; 4) to promote experience in developing temples as well as continuing &
58 sustainable development; 5) to encourage temples with learning process for self development to gain quality,
59 success, and social acceptance; and 6) to promote work integration of all sectors, efficiency and full benefits in
60 developing temples to meet the standards.

61 However, the establishment of criteria for temple development to cover all aspects must include the matter of
62 environment, especially with the way of life with environmental friendly living as a good model for society. These
63 criteria for the environmental management for temples should contain factors covering the physical and biological
64 areas, and the practices of those who come to get benefits within the temples, offering things to monks, and the
65 practices of monks who are considered as important persons to teach the Dharma principles and practices, and
66 be respected by people. Therefore, each area should have indicators as criteria for appropriate operations.

67 Therefore Step 2 Organized a meeting for the committee for developing criteria of environmental management
68 for temples which consisted of 15 resource persons. The meeting was conducted in order to consider the draft of
69 management for temples which was drafted in Step 1.

70 Regarding the results from the meeting of the resource persons, the criteria of environmental management
71 for temples were obtained as follows. To conclude, the criteria of environmental management for temples gained
72 from the consideration and agreement of resource persons totally comprised 6 factors and 44 indicators.

73 Step 3 Conducted a focus group discussion of 4 regions. The criteria of environmental management for temples
74 from the consideration process of the resource persons were brought by the research team to the focus group
75 discussion of 4 regions. The discussion aimed to investigate the opinions toward the participations of communities
76 and the sample of 40 temples in both urban and rural areas. The targets of the discussion comprised 240 monks,
77 temple wardens and people who got the benefits in the temples. They were 6 of them for each temple. The data
78 from this focus group discussion were analyzed for the correlation coefficient and the confirmatory factor analysis
79 was carried out for those 6 factors. The results gained were congruent and related into the same direction. This
80 indicated that the criteria of environmental management for temples were appropriate to be implemented.

81 Step 4 Organized a public hearing. The research team brought the criteria of environmental management
82 for temples to the public hearing of the academics, experts, local government officials, and those who involved
83 together to consider and criticize the criteria of environmental management for temples of 4 regions. After that,
84 the differences of data obtained from each region were analyzed and then synthesized to prioritize the factors
85 and indicators as follows. Step 5 Arranged a meeting to conclude the evaluation of criteria. A meeting for the
86 committee for developing criteria of environmental management for temples was organized to consider the criteria
87 obtained from the meetings from steps 2 to 5. Indicator 3.1 The temple has systems to deal with wastes and
88 waste water.

89 Indicator 3.2 The temple regularly cleans its buildings and areas.

90 Indicator 3.3

91 The temple promotes and supports the prevention of insects and animals that are poisonous and carriers of
92 disease by using natural methods.

93 Indicator 3.4

94 The temple has a protection management of smell pollution, dust, smoke, noise and others.

95 Factor 4 Well Being and Management comprised 9 indicators as follows.

96 Indicator 4.1 The temple promotes sanitation for monks and people who come for religious ceremonies within
97 the temple.

98 Indicator 4.2

99 The temple encourages and supports the monks to look after their health regularly.

100 Indicator 4.3 People provide clean water and the monks have nutritious food according to the principles of
101 food sanitation.

102 Indicator 4.4 The temple should have food offered by people appropriately to their health.

103 Indicator 4.5 The temple provides containers for food and keeps them clean as always.

104 Indicator 4.6 The temple encourages people to arrange simple religious ceremonies.

105 Indicator 4.7 The temple should provide clean water to be used in religious ceremonies.

106 Indicator 4.8 The temple promotes to reduce the use of candles and incense or joss sticks in religious ceremonies.

107 Indicator 4.9 The temple should provide clean places for the monks to sleep.
108 Factor 5 The Promotion of Morals toward the Environment comprised 6 indicators as follows.
109 Indicator 5.1 The temple should promote good behaviors and conducts in doing the religious ceremony
110 intentionally.
111 Indicator 5.2 The temple encourages appropriate and friendly uses of verbal language and practices between
112 monks and people.
113 Indicator 5.3 The temple promotes the uses of environmental friendly goods.
114 Indicator 5.4 The temple encourages people to offer themselves for the benefits of the temple and Buddhism.
115 Indicator 5.5 The temple does not allow people to leave their animals in the temple.
116 Indicator 5.6 The temple promotes its place as all vices free zone.
117 Factor 6 The Promotion of Learning comprised 6 indicators as follows.
118 Indicator 6.1 The temple records the history of the temple, religious places and community.
119 Indicator 6.2 The temple has data bases for plants, herbs and places within the temple together with materials
120 for public relations.
121 Indicator 6.3 The temple produces of the public relations materials for the learning sources of community.
122 Indicator 6.4 The community provides supports and promotion of learning within the temple. Indicator 6.5
123 The teaching of monks should include knowledge about the environment, national resources, disasters, and good
124 traditions and culture of the community.

125 2 III.

126 3 Discussion

127 Regarding the development of criteria of environmental management for temples, it was found that the criteria
128 comprised 6 factors as follows. Factor1 Physical and Biological Environment -The concept is that Buddhist
129 temples, both in urban or rural areas, are different in environmental conditions. Therefore, each temple should
130 determine its own vision, mission, and clear operational plan in relation to the Buddhist Monk and Novice
131 Administration Act and the global changes. The development and improvement of physical and biological
132 environment should provide Buddhists, people and organizations with opportunities to get involved. This can be
133 done by using the environmental friendly ways of life based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

134 Factor 2 The Conservation and Quality Development of the Environment -The concept is that, at present, local
135 plants including herbs basically used as medicines to cure illness are quite rare to find and reduced in amount.
136 Therefore, temples, which are considered as centers for involvement and places for different activities since the
137 past until the present, should have roles and functions in promoting the environmental conservation of various
138 plants. This is done in order to maintain them, make benefits to the communities, and also increase the biological
139 diversity at the same time.

140 Factor 3 The Management of Pollution, Wastes, and Waste Water -The concept is that Pollutions and wastes
141 are disgusting things for the society and have affected the health and sanitation of people. Temples should
142 therefore be clean and green places without wastes and pollutions suitable for monks to do religious ceremonies
143 or activities and also people who come to practice Dharma and get other benefits. The temple should then
144 have correct management to deal with pollutions and wastes and to prevent impacts on health, sanitation, and
145 ecological system in general.

146 Factor 4 Well Being and Management -The concept is that monks are those who play important roles to
147 inherit or continue the Buddhism and to teach its principles to people for the promotion of intellectual, moral,
148 and ethical development. Unfortunately, at present, it has been found that monks have many health problems
149 such as diabetics, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and chronic communicable diseases. Thus, the way to
150 promote the strong health and well being of the monks involves things that are offered or provided by people.
151 Also, people who come to arrange religious ceremonies or activities within the temples should have well being
152 and can bring the good things from the temples to be used in their families and communities.

153 Factor 5 The Promotion of Morals toward the Environment -The concept is that the religious ceremony
154 arrangements of people at present, without correct knowledge, are deviated from those taught by Lord Buddha.
155 Together with the current global and natural changes, people should practice the religious ceremony strictly for
156 their own benefits, not too much trouble to other lives.

157 Factor 6 The Promotion of Learning -The concept is that in the era of globalization, there have been wider
158 communication and learning of the people starting from community, society, country to the global levels. The
159 present society has then become or placed an importance on a learning society. The temples are therefore
160 considered as a learning resource in the society. They should promote life-long learning with useful information
161 provided to people who come to contact or do activities within the temples. This will help provide them knowledge
162 about environmental situations, and self development together at the same time with intellectual development.

163 From all 6 factors, they were relevant to the annual meeting of the National Health Assembly which mentioned
164 about the roles of monks toward the society. Apart from their teaching role to people, monks also have other roles
165 which are very important for social development. To summarize, the meeting (5th National Health Assembly,
166 Agenda 2.3, 18 November 2012: 1-7) proposed the roles of monks for social development as follows. 1) The role
167 in economic development involves, for example, the promotion for growing plants or natural agriculture with

5 B) GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

168 complete cycle, feeding silk, growing water melons, feeding fish, feeding pigs, establishing groups such as groups
169 for gems cutting, rice bank, saving trust, and village cremation. 2) The role in social development involves being
170 good models of behaviors and conducts, and leaders of community development such as building roads within
171 the community, setting rules for house fences, cleaning canals, developing running water systems, and building
172 containers for keeping rain water. These activities need cooperation between temples, villagers and government
173 agencies. 3) The role in educational development involves many aspects, for example, providing education to
174 the monks, looking after their well being and physical and biological environment, establishing educational parks
175 and libraries within temples, and organizing training for career development. 4) The role in health development
176 involves, for example, providing assistance to people by using traditional herbs for general, orthopedic, and drug
177 addiction treatments. The important role is that the promotion of mental health including the prevention and
178 recommendations of mental health problems, and rehabilitation of patients with chronic mental illness and drug
179 addiction. 5) The role in environmental development involves, for example, arranging shaded and green areas
180 within temples to relieve the sadness of people who are unhappy, being leaders in environmental development
181 in community, and organizing training for youths in environmental conservation. This role agreed with the
182 study of Veeravatnanond (1998) which mentioned about the roles of monks concerning the conservation and
183 development of environmental quality. They were, for example, 1) the role in providing education and training
184 about environmental conservation, and 2) the role in the environmental development.

185 From the above discussion, another role is that temples should be good models for religious ceremonies. The
186 ceremonies with the traditional practices from the past may cause luxury and expenses. They are not linked
187 with the knowledge and understanding about nature, but cause problems instead. Temples should be good
188 models for the improvement of those ceremonies appropriate to the incomes of people as well as the condition
189 of natural resources which have been gradually reduced and destroyed. The improvement of ceremonies or the
190 cultural changes of society will lead to suitable ways of life, good values, and effective protection of environmental
191 destruction.

192 To conclude, all factors and indicators of environmental management for temples gained from this development
193 have linked people sector with temples. These parties must cooperate in encouraging and supporting each other
194 in order to lead temples and communities to the holistic creation of environment within the temples. The
195 environmental management will be able to facilitate the religious ceremonies and to promote good mental health
196 which is the basis of good behaviors and conducts in society at present and also in the future. Therefore, the
197 factors and indicators of environmental management for temples obtained from this development are not new
198 things or tasks for monks and people. They are those old tasks used for teaching people and also tasks that
199 people have to do with temples. These two parties must support each other. This action will bring good benefits
200 toward the development of environmental quality within temples through the real involvement of all sectors of
201 the community.

202 IV.

203 4 Recommendations a) The Implementations of Factors and 204 Indicators of Environmental Management For Temples

205 The factors and indicators of environmental management for temples were obtained in this study and development
206 by using the participatory process from all sectors. The mutual point of development followed the holistic
207 approach in which all factors and indicators were related. The development of a factor and an indicator absolutely
208 affected other factors or indicators. This environmental development within temples through the use of factors
209 and indicators obtained from the mutual agreements was then quite difficult for all temples to proceed to achieve
210 all criteria determined due to various reasons. They depended upon, for example, the readiness of budget, area,
211 community to provide supports, and many others. Thus, the development of temples according to all factors
212 takes time to operate.

213 Therefore the development of environment within the temples should start from the management of
214 environment in the temples with the factor that the temples have potentials to do first and upon the context
215 of each temple. This is made at least to start the operations for promoting the pleasant environment within
216 temples, to be useful for both the monks and people who come to get benefits in the temples, and to inspire the
217 environmental management with the temples as the center of the development.

218 5 b) General Recommendation

219 The information gained from the research will be very useful directly toward the monks and people who come to
220 the temples in terms of mental and physical conditions and also peacefulness. Thus, the development of temples
221 must be based on the holistic principles and not only focused on any area in particular. The development must be
222 gradually carried out. All factors of environmental management for temples must be developed. Especially, the
223 development must get involvements of the local administrative organizations, government agencies, associations,
224 foundations, and private sectors in order to promote and support the temples located both in urban and rural
225 communities to have their own environmental management appropriate to the context of each temple as much
226 as possible.



Figure 1: Factor 1

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was also to conclude the factors and indicators of environmental management for temples gained from participatory process of all sectors namely monks, temple wardens, resource persons, academics, experts, local government officials, involved persons, and people who came to get benefits in the temples through brainstorming from the central unit and different regions namely central, northern, southern, and northeastern regions. To conclude, there were totally 6 main factors and 32 indicators. Factor 1 Physical and Biological Environment comprised 6 indicators. Factor 2 The Conservation and Quality Development of the Environment comprised 6 indicators. Factor 3 The Management of Pollutions, Wastes, and Waste Water comprised 4 indicators. Factor 4 Well Being and Management comprised 9 indicators. Factor 5 The Promotion of Morals toward the Environment comprised 6 indicators. Factor 6 The Promotion of Learning comprised 6 indicators. Conclusion about the factors and indicators of environmental management for temples Details for the factors and indicators of environmental management for temples were as follows. Factor 1 Physical and Biological Environment comprised 6 indicators as follows. Indicator 1.1 Indicator 1.4 Infrastructures within the temple are comfortable, convenient and suitable for usage. Indicator 1.5 The temple has boards and maps informing places, buildings and important places within the temple. Indicator 1.6 The temple should have appropriate sanitary crematory or places for making merits for the community. Factor 2 The Conservation and Quality Development of the Environment comprised 6 indicators as follows. Indicator 2.1 The temple has gardens for herbs, local plants or various kinds of plants appropriate to geographical conditions for the best benefits of the temple and community. Indicator 2.2 The temple has a regular maintenance of the plants. Indicator 2.3 The temple promotes the growing of herbs for consumption. Factor 3 The Management of Pollutions, Wastes, and Waste Water comprised 4 indicators as follows.

Figure 2:

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