

The Amuletic Small Buddha Images: Concepts, History and Cultural Development

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Abstract

These topics on “The Small Buddha Images: ideas, history, and the cultural development” have three purposes; namely, (1) to study the ideas, history of these images’ construction by Thai societies, (2) to study the procedure of meaningful expression and their values in Thai civilization and culture, 3) to analyze the Buddha images in terms of the societal and cultural dynamic. Especially for the research methodology, this is the qualitative techniques by the data retrieval or recovery related to the historical configuration, analytical processes in an attempt to convey their meanings and values. In addition, the arrangements of focus groups have been prepared, comprised of the archaeological and historical expert groups of Buddhism and Buddha Images in Thai societies amounting to 15-20 monks/men. Subsequently, those data have been analyzed, summarized in consistent with these objectives for the completion of the research.

As a result, it has been revealed that the ideas and history of creations were as follows: - they had been supported Buddhism, announced the Buddhism Dharma, acted for gifts (or giving aims/ making of merits for the dead people, called “an intercessional expiratory offering”; otherwise, “donation given to a Holy Persons”, worshiped/offered sacrifice to Buddha grace. According to the history of Buddha images creation; they had been influenced or affected by the formation of Buddha images as Human figures/designs for the first time for 300 – 400 years after the Buddha lifetime. For the social and cultural dynamic sensibleness, the Buddha images had originated the sacred stimulant for Thai societies, as sub consciousness led to the (Dhammādhiññhàna) exposition in terms of ideas, subject to the sorrow/suffering extinguishments. Finally, people had possessed and enjoyed their high morale and strength of mind by Buddha

sacrosanct grace. These were the procedural changes of fine and glowing culture and societies so far.

Keywords: Small Buddha mages; Concepts, History; Cultural Development

Introduction

The creation of Small Buddha Images had been developed from the configuration of imaginary design of Buddha around 6-7 B.E. for the reverence and worship similar to the monument, the Four districts of Holy Places of Buddhism. Due mainly to anyone unable to travel into the real places for paying respect and adulation habitually reproduced a variety of holy & auspicious things for reverence, they have customarily created the Buddha sculptures or figurines instead. In the beginning, the constructions with metallic clanging, carving had been absolutely difficult, owing to the rareness of the skilled craftsmanship and budget requirement for construction. Consequently, only the kings were favorable to construct; for instance, King Ganesha, King Alexander. Owing to the construction merely focusing on (Buddhànussati) recollection of the Buddha, everybody perceived Buddha images would recall for the Buddha only, that is – the creation had been made unsimilar to the Buddha figure. In those days, the poor people desirable for the advancement or improvement of making merit into the next future lives had been unable to construct the metal Buddha sculptures; subsequently, they had built the respectful Buddha appearance by the soil under the belief of the meritorious approaches without using any properties or highly intellectual. Afterward, whenever their wishes would have come true, a number of reverent Buddha images made with soil had tremendously occurred. Some people had enormously made for 84,000 Buddha images, In addition, the discovery had been found or exposed the soil-made Buddha images within various caves in the

Malaya peninsula. For such ideas, the creation of Small Buddha images had occurred for loading into the most important places and locations. Later, the permanent structures in Buddhism had been elevated; for instance, PhraThat, pagodas, plaster bases (of a Buddha), (Mahàpañimà-patiññhàna) base (for the principal Buddha image), then, the underground hiding places containing the Small Buddha Images were built, instead of being kept into many caves. Most of the Small Buddha Images, found in the underground hiding places had been built by the baked-clay material, found of Chin, and some lead materials.

As a result, the researchers were interested in studying concepts of Small Buddha Images invention, history of construction, and procedure of meaningful conveying the Buddha Images made throughout the social and cultural development occurred by the Small Buddha Images, concomitantly beneficial both of the studying and developing related to the Small Buddha Images creation in the future..

Objectives of Research

1. To study the concepts and history of the Small Buddha Images creation in Thai society.
2. To study the procedure of meaningful expression and their values in Thai civilization and culture.
3. To analyze the Buddha images in terms of the societal and cultural dynamic.

Research Methodology

The research procedure comprised of the significant steps as follows:-

1. Type of research was the qualitative interview, together with a focus group

2. Studying information from the teaching of Buddhism Concerning to the Small Buddha Images in Tipitaka and the related researches. Field research had conducted by the interviewing academicians, who had possessed in the Small Buddha Images creation, so as to compose into the material substances as follows:-

(2.1) Collection of data & information from documents and related researches of primary & secondary sources

(2.2) Interview from the Small Buddha Images academicians, arrangement on focus group as the data & information collection

(2.3) Preparation of report for the completed research submitted to the Institute of Buddhism Research

Research' Results

This research was the mixed methodology as the documentary research, comprising of the canon of Tipitaka, various documents, academic texts, research reports, theses concerning to the topics of the Small Buddha Images, together with the data of the qualitative interview. This was an analytical study on documents with an interview by focus group so as to find out the depth of information in terms of the Gnostic knowledge bases from the genuine experiences of researchers for this topic. Many of academicians and experts amounting to 20 persons had been requested by an invitation, as well as distributed questionnaires to the omniscient persons around 60 monks/men. The interview had been performed concerning to the procedure of creation, history of construction, history of the building, meaningful conveying of the Small Buddha Images, including many issues related to the social and cultural aspects for the achievement of this research performances/presentation. The research had been summarized as follows:-

I. Concepts and history of the Small Buddha Images creation, these actions had been conducted for the Buddha representatives/ delegates. These were tremendously convenient for especially taking with oneself in various places. For the prior purposes, the researchers had considered or thought that these manners had come from the respect and reverence in the Buddha. Every time, respected/faithful people had installed the Symbols of Buddha Images with themselves whether they would like to take a journey of traveling around or not. It had been inconvenient, whenever people would have large Buddha Images with them; therefore, the Buddha Images had been condensed into the smaller ones, becoming the votive tablets called “The Small Buddha Images” currently. Having been recognized, the prior concepts of the Condensed or Small Buddha Images existence had mutually related to the supernatural power or miracle no more. For the Small Buddha Images creation in Thai society, it had been influenced or controlled by the King Milin, Yonok ancestor, preceded after the 300-400 B.E. when the Buddha Image creation had been built in form of the human being appearance for the first time. King Milin had been a philosopher, warrior, who was exceptionally faithful and extremely believed in Buddhism, and ingenious to construct the Buddha Images as the Buddha representatives for reverence and worship, accustomed to the Greek Deities offering sacrifice.

II. The meaningful conveying of the Small Buddha Images. According to the research and archaeological evidence appeared in each of era or period, it had not been apparent in any Tipitaka Cannons. However, the evidence of construction had been continually found since the Greek epoch, appreciably conveying the expansively meaningful representatives for the Buddha, Dharma, and Holy Buddhist Saints. In conclusion,

- (a) Approaching to (Ratanattaya) the Triple Gem
- (b) Conveying meaningful substances to Dharma

(c) Recalling materials called (Buddhàussati) recollection of the Buddha

(d) Inheriting the Buddhism Ages/ time by using material substances

III. For the social and cultural dynamic, Thai intellect had greatly affected by the creation of the Small Buddha Images for better changing to Thai society. The conclusion can be summarized as follows:-

a) Thai society had obtained the Sacred reverent materials, not concentrating on the malignance.

b). All Thai people had trusted in reverential substances as the subconsciousness led to the (Dhammàdhiñhàna) exposition in terms of ideas;

c). Sustainability Buddhism for the next generations

d). The way leading to the extinguishing of suffering by the power/influence of Buddha's Grace.

e). Causing any persons to be grateful to their parents of lineages and ancestries.

f). Institute of the Monarchy had been paid tribute to, praised and esteemed extensively.

g). The oriental Kings of Thailand had scrupulously come closet to the inhabitants or Thai people meticulously.

h). At wartime, the highest morale and strength of mind had been fully sheltered by the consecrated Buddha's grace

Research Conclusion

From the past till the currently present time, the creation of Small Buddha Images had the major principles; namely, the approach through the (Ratanattaya) Triple Gems by applying the material substances as the strategy realizing the Dharma principles or teachings of Lord Buddha. As long as being

unable to reach through the Nirvana, all Buddhists would have been coped with a blessed medium for reliance in their mind, practicing their mind for purification and refinement. Consequently, mind development and the meritorious performances in Buddhism have been built-up; namely,

1) (Pariññā) accurate or exact knowledge or specified the (Dukkha Ariyasacca) the Noble Truth of Suffering, 2) (Pahāna) giving up, abandoning; eradication, or removal of the (Samudaya) the Cause of Suffering, 3) (Sacchikātabbadhamma) that which is to be realized, i.e. the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna, or clarify the (Nirodha) the Cessation or Extinction of suffering, 4). Bhāvanā) development, mental culture, meditation or developing the occurrence of (Magga) the Noble Path, the Noble Eightfold Path. Having already been done, ones had been developed by applying the Small Buddha Images as the medium throughout the extrication completely. When having been already done, ones would develop one's selves by applying the Small Buddha Images as a medium throughout the extrication absolutely. Major significant principles occurred from these Small Buddha Images creation had made Thai society and culture drastically changed beyond the deviation from Buddha Dharma concepts. As a consequence, the current Thai societies have emphasized on the conviction or belief in the magical power of the Small Buddha Images more than the Triple Gems. Those beliefs had been incorrect from the principles of Buddhism. Provided that Buddhism.

The kindness for 9 positive discriminations, comprising of – Dharma enlightenment, good legislative code of monastic disciplines, the leader broadcasting that the well-trained human being accessing through the ultimate Dharma plane of consciousness, being purified by extrication or liberation as the symbol or portrayal of Buddha. Contrarily, beliefs in supernatural power and miracles have been absolutely deviated from Buddha Dharma, because one had been absorbed or crazy oneself in other control. This anticipation had been

opposed and reversed the Law of Kamma since they would request for other superiority supported them leading to the success or achievement. Having recognized in other best aspects, it had been perceived that faith or belief concealed in Buddhism still trusted in those magical power influential from Buddhism; for instance, the meaning of the word “Buddha’s grace” pointed to the sacred influences from Buddhism mantra. Therefore, it had silently been able to bring the sacred of Small Buddha Images into the principles of Buddhism. As having mentioned by Phra Phromkunabhon (P. Payudhto),” If it had been faithful in “Buddha’s grace”, it would point to the choice of rightfulness”, meant the Three of Triple Gems.

Discussion

These topics of research can be argumentative instruction as follows:-

1. Specify the way of Small Buddha Images creation by focusing on the ceremonial ritual and steps so as to allow the participants’ minds increasingly tending towards the (Ratanattaya) Triple Gems, not focusing on the supernatural power and miracle demonstration. Due mainly to lead those Buddhist to the misunderstanding, such performances would have not been done on the creation of amuletic Small Buddha Images.

2. The quality development for the public should have been done, especially for the next generation. The studies on the Small Buddha Images creation for the youth would have been supported or carried on in order to realize the significance and necessity in such forms as the Buddha arts. The customs and cultural affection or protectiveness would have been carried out in research studies straightforward to religious knowledge, as well as the ability for the development and sustainability of Thai societies effectively.

3. The social and legal measures would have been made use of, owing to the groups and network’s expansion for the Buddha commerce. Accordingly,

the conscious encouragement would have been raised for the realization and proper value fulfillment in the amuletic Small Buddha Images correctly. The local people would have been promoted and participated in the amuletic Small Buddha Images conservation as a kind of pagoda in Buddhism. All people would have mutually taken care of and maintained as the restraint or self-control of the mind. In addition, the government agencies, the local administrative organizations would be responsible for protecting, guarding in the Small Buddha Images creation absolutely, according to the Buddhists' principles for highest advantages.

4. Policies and the government directions would have been decisively determined in terms of the Small Buddha Images conservation and protection as the principles for the related government agencies and their official held on and taken for practices, including the publication of conventional arts and culture information. For any Buddha sculptures and arts, the activities for the developmental activities would have been established by utilizing the Small Buddha Images as a medium for the international spread and propagation. Furthermore, the governmental agencies with the communities' leaders would have arranged for any activities, promoted and stimulated most citizens in communities reciprocally participating or safeguarding in the preservation on the Buddha arts of the amuletic Small Buddha Images.

5. The government would have cooperated with monks and local people, properly entitled by looking after and well managing the Small Buddha Images creation appropriately. These activities would have forced, pushed forward and driven Thai societies, custom & Tradition, and Culture prominently in values and worth of mind, as well as the access in Dharma practices supported by the government budget.

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