

## **Factors Influencing People's Five Precepts Observance, A Case Study of Pgaz-Koen-Yau Community in Ban Mae Ka Nai, Mae Ho Sub-District, Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province**

**Uten Laping ,Sangad Chienjuntuk,  
Kittikoon Phoolaiyao, Kittikoon Phoolaiyao ,  
Pradit Kammungkun and Monthri Wichaiwong**  
Mahamakut Buddhist University Lanna Campus

### **Abstract**

The purposes of this research are 1) to study the factors influencing people's observance of the five precepts 2) to identify the advantages of observing the five precepts and 3) to recommend methods for observing the five precepts for people in Pgaz-koen-yau Community in Ban Mae KaNai, Mae Ho Sub-District, Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province. Ten samples included the abbot, monks, community leader, teacher and residents of Pgaz-koen-yau Community in Ban Mae KaNai, Mae Ho Sub-District, Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province. Data were collected by interviewed and the descriptive analysis was used to analyze data in order to present quantitative descriptions of the data.

The research found that 1) Temples, schools and community have supported the Buddhist activities. The traditional beliefs have conformed to Buddhist teaching and this has encouraged people in the community to observe the five precepts. 2) Observance of the five precepts has led to happy and harmonious community with generous people. Villagers have engaged in the community activities. 3) Village community should be set up. Adults should be the good role models for the youngsters.

**Keywords :** Factors, observance of the five precepts, Pgaz-koen-yau people

### **Introduction**

Buddhism is considered as an official religion of Thailand as the majority practices Buddhism. The Buddhism principles and beliefs have an impact on Thai style of living as well as culture. The Buddhism principles for daily life are such as Logiyadhamma and Lugutaradhamma which both considered as the high Dhamma. The precepts are Dhamma practice to follow in order to improve the Dhamma as the Buddhist mentioned on the characteristics of precepts, meditation,

and wisdom that precepts has an effect on meditation, meditation has an effect the wisdom and the wisdom will lead the person to the salvation from Asava such as Kamasava, Pavasava and Avijjasava.

The principles of precepts appeared in Agganyasutta. It presented the tales of human in ancient period when there was a serenity of society until the greed emerged as the resources were insufficient and the people started to store the food and exploited each other. Such events lead to the arguments, lying and until the worst, outrage. Persecution of human caused the chaos and conflict to the society. Therefore, the solution was to seek for the admirable leader who has ability to reprove and expel the misbehavior of the people and the person who commits sin for the peace of society. Afterwards, the first caste, Kshatriyas, has emerged, followed by other castes. In this Sutrapitaka, the Buddhist aimed the human to realize that the value of human nature is independent from the Bramanism's belief. On the other hand, the value of human nature depends on the action, the intention not to exploit others indirectly and directly. Furthermore, according to the Tripitaka, five precepts is considered as of the good governance. In Cakkavattisutta, the emperor applied precepts in the rules of good governance with the glass disc; a sign of powerful person. Whenever the glass disc pauses at specific city, instead of seizing the property of such city, the emperor chose to give the preaching on five precepts to those governors of the city as it mentioned in the sutra that "You should not kill. You should not take the thing that they do not give to you. You should not sexually misconduct. You should not lie. You should not drink liquor and you should reign as you do (Amom Ampai, 2011 : 63-64). For this result, the cities under the governance admired the Dhamma of the emperor and it lead to the relationship between five precepts and society and good governance without any weapons and outrage. This is to say, the reason behind the teaching of five precepts is to acknowledge the society to realize that the essence of the five precepts is not only regarding the individual good action, but also relates to the action in the social level. If the people in the society misbehave, they will always exploit each other. The issue that a researcher has observed is that five precepts for individual on stealing is the beginning of immorality which leads the person to misconduct other precepts. It starts from the insatiability of the human along with the insufficiency or lack of resources, human then do the stealing. It can be said that the selfishness and survival instinct of the human is the main cause which makes the human controlled by the desires and lust. Therefore, it is the duty of the leader of the society to realize and plan for a good life quality of the people. Five precepts would lead the peace to the person who follow and

cause the society to eliminate the persecution in terms of action, verbal or mental. Peaceful society with the practice of five precepts is not idealism if the leaders of the society follow along the practice and apply the principle to their life and support others to follow as the Buddha taught us the principles. The five precepts consist of (1) to abstain from killing living beings (2) to abstain from taking what is not given (3) to abstain from sexual misconduct (4) to abstain from false speech (5) to abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness. Buddha insisted us to completely maintain the practice of five precepts and have faith to the Threefold refuge in order to escape from the stage of all vices (Samorn Thongdee, 1999: 300-302.). Nevertheless, it revealed in *Pancasikkhapatasuttat* that the conservation of five precepts depends on the people who we associate as he mentioned that the person who abstain from those in five precepts always associate with the person who practice the same precepts and the person who misconduct, in the same time, will associate with the same type of person (Samorn Thongdee, 1999 : 201-202.) . For this reason, if we desire for the peaceful stage and serenity, we have to choose to associate with the person who follow the practice of five precepts as five precepts play an important role in social level with its ability to promote the society to be peaceful. According to *Panjaverasutra*, five precepts are defined as the five *Verasutra* while the person who violates the *verasutra*, will be in the stage of all vices “The person who kill living beings will be in sorrow in this life, next life as killing living beings is considered as a factor of *Verasutra* (Samorn Thongdee, 1999 : 321.) This is to that the person who violates the five precepts will suffer mentally and physically and it will have an effect on this life as well as next life. Therefore, five precepts is considered as an essential rules of the Buddhist with a large self-encouragement to control the actions to be in good deeds.

In conclusion, precept means the basic practices to encourage the coexistence in the society without any mental and physical harm in order to lead them to follow proper steps of life. Such practice will also have an effect on the behavior of the human to stay mentally and physically calm which leads to a good speech, thought and expression. This is to say, precept leads the people to abstain from misconduct according to the Buddhism.

*Pgazkoenyau* is a majority hill tribe among all hill tribes locates in the high land of the northern part to the central part of Thailand and covers 15 provinces consist of Chaing Mai, Mae Hong Son, Tak, Lampun, Kanchanaburi, Prae, Ratchaburi, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Petchaburi, UtaiThani, Suphabur, Prachuap Kiri Khan and Sukhothai which a total number of hill tribe population is

Pgazkoenyau community or society has the difference in terms of beliefs and religions comparing to others. The community has the systems of thought, value and culture both in the aspect of material and immaterial also the unique beliefs, traditions and cultures which differ from other tribes. Moreover, Pgzakoenyau tribe also follows the practice of five precepts in Buddhism strictly. The question is that, what is the factor of the occurrence of such strict belief?

The researcher has an interest in the principle of the Buddhism and, as a part of Buddhism institute of the community, has the duty to inherit and propagate the principles of the Buddhism. As a result, a researcher has an interest in the fact of how five precepts play a role in the life of the people in Mae Kranai or Pgzakoenyau community. The result of this research will be another guideline to influence and promote the interest in Buddhism and lead to the practice according to the principle of Buddhism which considered as an official religion of Thailand. Also, the research will lead to apply of five precepts in terms of practice in the community.

### **Objectives of the research**

- 1) To study the factors which have an effect on the observation of the five precepts of Pgzakoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.
- 2) To study the advantages of the observation of the precepts of the five precepts of Pgzakoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.
- 3) To study the suggestion on the observation of the precepts of the five precepts of Pgzakoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.

### **Research Methods**

1) The targets of this study were the abbot, monk, community leader, teacher, and people in Pgzakoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province. A number of 10 sample group for data analysis consisted of 1. Abbot 2.Monk 3.Community leader 4.Teacher 5.Elder 6. Teenage and people in Pgzakoenyaucommunity, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province has been chosen by purposive sampling.

2) The tool used in the research was interview. The questionnaire was conducted by framework and theories relevant to the issues, objectives, scopes

of the research and definition of technical terms. The process of conducting the tool and seeking for the quality of the tool is as follows:

2.1) study the relevant papers and research in order to use as a guideline for the questionnaire

2.2) Draft the questionnaire which covers the objectives. The questionnaire later examined the accuracy of the content and objectives by 2 experts

2.3) Revise the examined draft of questionnaire to comply with the content and objectives of the study

2.4) Consider the suitability of the questionnaire covered to the details of the contents to improve the error

2.5) The questionnaire is used to collect the data from the target

3) For data analysis, the researcher used in-depth interview with the targets consisted of abbot, teachers, community leader, monk, lay temple officiator, elder and teenager and the data has been analyzed by descriptive analysis afterwards and relates the data to show the relations in various aspects according to the truth. The data was analyzed in a form of description and categorized by the topics of the objectives of this research as follows:

3.1) To study the To study the factors which have an effect on the observation of the five percepts of Pgazkoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae

3.2) To study the advantages of the observation of the percepts of the five percepts of Pgazkoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.

3.3) To study the suggestion on the observation of the percepts of the five percepts of Pgazkoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.

## **Results**

1) The factors which have an effect on the observation of the five percepts of Pgazkoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province.

1.1) Physical Factors consist of: 1. Temple; it found that temple promotes the people to pay respect to the Buddha in the evening of Buddhist holy day. The people will gather and pray at the temple along with the hearing the sermon and observing the percepts. 2. School; it found that the school has collaborated to organize the activities in the Buddhist day and promote the community to do good deeds as well as encourage them to observe the

percepts. 3. Village; it found that the village promotes the people in the community to observe the precepts in the friendly environment of the community. Moreover, there was also the same traditional belief which is the spirit of the guardian before practice the Buddhism. The village contains both Buddhist and Christian but still they live together happily like relatives with the guideline of the Buddhism principles.

1.2) Mental Factors consist of: 1. Traditional belief such as the worship of the spirit if guardian before practicing Buddhism which has an impact on the observing of precepts of the Pgazkoenyau community. Furthermore, sexual misconduct is considered against the custom and the spirit of ancestor will punish such person to be in trouble without any success in life. 2. Meditation is considered as a tool for mental improvement. Therefore, the temple encourages the people in Pgazkoenyau community to meditate in Buddhist holy day. Buddhists will gather together, pray and meditate every evening which leads them to be generous with charity, do good deeds and coexist in the society peacefully. Besides, the wisdom also helps them to be careful in life. 3. Charity is defined as assist and sharing, giving without any expectation of something to be returned which leads the people in Pgazkoenyau community to be kind and not exploiting each other.

1.3) Social Factors consist of. Abbot which is a role model in observing the precepts, giving and living together peacefully, ,monk which does good deeds, strictly observe the precepts and teach the people to follow the five precepts and guide the people to practice according to the principles, helping each other, being kind, do good deeds with Dhamma and living happily together.

2) The advantages of observing the five precepts consist of: the first precept will benefit us to not commit a sin to each other as the second precept is to abstain from stealing, the people in the community will trust on each other and such incident will lead to the happiness of the community and no one will be in jailed. From the third precept, the family will live together happily without any fight or argument and the family will be united without any diseases to the members and not against the tradition. The fourth precept will benefit us to be respectful for others and the last precept will benefit us to be healthy without any illness and live longer without any fight or argument.

3) The suggestion on the observation of the precepts is suggested to do village community for everyone to follow and observe the precepts strictly. The committee shall be appointed in order to be responsible in especially five

percepts. Awards or certificates shall be provided to the people or community that observe the percepts or having low rate of crimes.

## **Discussion**

The factors which have an effect on the observation of the five percepts of Pgzakoenyau community, Baan Mae Kanai, Tambon Mae Ho, Amphoe Mae Sareang, Mae Hong Son Province consist of 1) Physical factors including 1.1) The temple promotes the people to pay respect to the Buddha in the evening of Buddhist holy day. The people will gather and pray at the temple along with the hearing the sermon and observing the percepts which comply with the research conducted by SamornThongdee (Thongdee, 1999 :45-46) which mentioned that hearing the sermon at the temple or through the radio relates to the behavior on observation of the five percepts. 1.2) the school has collaborated to organize the activities in the Buddhist day and promote the community to do good deeds as well as encourage them to observe the percepts which comply with the research conducted by Samorn Thongdee(Thongdee, 1999 : 45-46) which acknowledged on the physical condition that it is considered as an essential part to control the human behavior such as the participation at Buddhism school on Sunday or being a member of Buddhism and cultural clubs relates to the observation of the five percepts and applying to daily life. 1.3) the village promotes the people in the community to observe the percepts in the friendly environment of the community. Moreover, there was also the same traditional belief which is the spirit of the guardian before practice the Buddhism strictly which comply with the concept of idea of P.APayutto (P.A.Payutto, 2008 : 419-420) who said that the rules must be provided in order to live together happily in the society. Such laws shall control the actions of the people in society to be good and being a good member of the society under the same standard.

In Buddhist society, percept is defined as the rules that control the actions and the activity of the community 2) Mental factors including 2.1) Traditional belief such as the worship of the spirit if guardian before practicing Buddhism which has an impact on the observing of percepts of the Pgzakoenyau community. Furthermore, sexual misconduct is considered against the custom and the spirit of ancestor will punish such person to be in trouble without any success in life which comply with the concept of idea of AmornAmpai (Amorn Ampai, 2011 : 67) who said that the way of life or path of human in each society is different depends on the group of people in that

society. Behavior or action is the measurement on the development of the mind while the developed one will cause the peace to the world, the world without war, genocide, scramble, corruption nor the sexual behavior which cause the chaos and separation in the society. The society without lies, deceiving or alcohol which considered as a source of carelessness and disaster. Without those things, the people in the society will live together happily and help each other as they are related. 2.2) Meditation is considered as a tool for mental improvement. Therefore, the temple encourages the people in Pgazkoenyau community to meditate in Buddhist holy day. Buddhists will gather together, pray and meditate every evening which leads them to be generous with charity, do good deeds and coexist in the society peacefully which comply with Khanthong Wattanapradit (Khanthong Wattanapradit, 2014 : 24-36) who said that the motivation to observe the sixth precept is to eliminate Asava and bring out the faith to realize the teaching. 2.3) Charity is defined as assist and sharing, giving without any expectation of something to be returned which leads the people in Pgazkoenyau community to be kind and not exploiting each other which comply with the idea of ( P.A.Payutto, 1989 : 77) who said that to live together peacefully according to the Buddhism is to not exploit the society and environment. The society without any predation will cause the harmony or balancing which is the beneficence between the elements in the system. Moreover, moderate practice influences the beneficence between human, nature and environment. 3) Social factors consist of. Abbot which is a role model in observing the precepts, giving and living together peacefully, ,monk which does good deeds, strictly observe the precepts and teach the people to follow the five precepts and guide the people to practice according to the principles, helping each other, being kind, do good deeds with Dhamma and living happily together which comply with Khanthong Wattanapradit (Khanthong Wattanapradit ,2014 : 24-36) who mentioned in the article of method to motivate the observation of five precepts that the essence of it is not only focused on the good deeds which is only in individual level but also relates to the actions in the society as well. If the people commit a sin in the society will however cause the trouble and leads to the violation of other precepts afterwards.

2) The advantages of observing the five precepts consist of: the first precept will benefit us to not commit a sin to each other as the second precept is to abstain from stealing, the people in the community will trust on each other and such incident will lead to the happiness of the community and no



one will be in jailed. From the third percept, the family will live together happily without any fight or argument and the family will be united without any diseases to the members and not against the tradition. The fourth percept will benefit us to be respectful for others and the last percept will benefit us to be healthy without any illness and live longer without any fight or argument. Such abovementioned statement comply with the concept of idea of (Somdetphrasanghrat , 2014 : 16) written in Dhammaleela magazine issue 165 that there are many advantages of observation of the percepts which will remain to such person in this the present life and next life and it will bring us to the sixth heaven depends on the delicacy of the percepts that observed and practiced. If the virtue still remain without any effect of sin, it may cause that person to be born as a human who completes with the four treasures. The advantages of the observation of the percepts are to bring peace to the society and prevent the tort of human rights that will cause the arguments, suspicion and chaos in the society. Furthermore, the five percepts is ruled to control the physical or verbal expression which responds the power of desire.

### **Suggestion**

1) The five percepts is not difficult to observe in life and it benefits to the person who practice. Therefore, the people should observe the percepts.

2) To observe the percepts is to maintain a peace of mind, physic and words and also not to exploit others.

3) Village community shall be created for everyone to follow and observe the percepts strictly.

4) The committee shall be appointed in order to be responsible in especially five percepts. Awards or certificates shall be provided to the people or community that observe the percepts or having low rate of crimes.

5) Buddhists shall realize considerably to be a real Buddhist with the fundamental of the five percepts, not only because of the status.

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