

## **An Application of The Four Buddhist Principles of Development (Bhāvanā) in Balancing Life for The Elderly Persons In Modern Society**

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### **Abstract**

The purposes of the research were; (1) to study the concepts related to the elderly persons as appeared in Buddhist scripture and modern science (2) to apply the Four Principles of Development for the elderly persons in the modern society and (3) to present the activity patterns for self-development of the elderly persons in accordance with the Buddhist guideline. The research methodology is qualitative research and searching from the data sources, that is, Tipitaka, the texts, documents, academic articles, comparative analysis by use descriptive method.

The results of the research are found that in the teachings of Buddhism, to live with the real qualitative and happy life is important. Buddhism teaches both the physical and mental practice in the same time with efficiency in compliance with the principle of Middle Way that summarized to the Four Principles of Development to develop the physical, moral and mental behavior and to develop the knowledge and understanding perfectly, that is, the elderly persons can apply for creating the balance in their lives by having the activity patterns namely happiness, funny, bright and peace.

**Keywords :** Application, the Four Buddhist Principles of Development, Elderly persons.

### **Introduction**

From the performance of the population's policy and laying out the family planning of Thailand that faces the successfulness including the progression in developing the country in together with the aspect of economy, society and the progress of education, physician, public health and modern technology, they play an important role to encourage Thai people to have more knowledge and skill to protect and take care of their health and to make Thai people have good health and prolong their lives. From the successfulness as mentioned it results in the state and the rate of birth tending to reduce and the change of population's structure, that is, the populations are in the higher aging tending to increase. While the populations are in the childish ages and working ages tending to reduce approximately in the year of 2573 B.E. the elderly populations will increase in the level of 25% or approximately 17.76 million people (The Office of Encouragement and Protection of the Elderly

persons, 2013 : 1). or in the average, one of four Thais will exist and the rate of the elderly population increase rapidly. This point every segment must realize of and prepare the various aspects to gather the resources and various co-sciences to be ready for receiving the change in the aspect of economy, health, society and encouragement of good qualification of life. To protect the elderly persons and provide the fringe benefits for them are able to reach the basic services for living including the construction of the social insurance in order to establish the stability for all the elderly persons.

When individuals reach the aging period of life, they will have the physical, mental, emotional, intelligent change and society and environment will be much difference from the past period of life and rapidly. (Udompon Chanpaiboo, 2005 : 13-17). It can be seen that elderly persons' problems do not only depend on the increasing totality but also depend on the persons' quality of life, namely to provide the medical services and public health in order to receive the elderly persons' problems together with providing the basic services of society, prevention and health treatment, continuous education and earning stability for occurrence in family and community for enhancing the elderly persons' quality of life. From Thipawan Suthanon's research, the results of research are found that the elderly persons experience the problems in 4 aspects, that (1) the physical problem (2) the mental problem (3) the social and co-living problem (4) the economical and earnings problem. For the elderly persons, the samples, experience various diseases found in general elderly persons. (Thipawan Suthanon, 2013 : Abstract). It can be seen that the elderly persons experience a lot of problems and they have to adapt themselves for facing those problems. If they adapt themselves in the wrong way, it will not result in the benefits for themselves and society. So those are importance of the elderly persons do not depend on the long stay, the totality of the elderly population more or less, the rate of increasing or reducing population. It depends on the elderly persons' quality of life. So the things that should be considered are that How do they live? How do they have the way of life? And how do they develop themselves? So they will live happily and equivalence occurs in their lives in the present time.

### **The research's objectives**

1. To study the concepts related to the elderly persons as appeared in Buddhist scripture and modern science
2. To apply the Four Principles of Development for the elderly persons in the modern society and
3. To present the activity patterns for self-development of the elderly persons in accordance with the Buddhist guideline

## The four Buddhist Principles of Development as appeared in Buddhist scriptures

The word “Bhāvanā” in the former time translated into “Progress” “Bhāvanā” if it is translated in compliance with the alphabets can be translated into “make to be or make to have”. Anything that does not have should be created together with increasing and strength or anything else. On the other hand, we translate it as “Training”, the word “Training” comes to be close to the meaning of Sikkhā. So the word “Sikkhā” and “Bhāvanā” comes to be close of each other. Some time it is used instead of each other. This is the connection with the main principle in Buddhist practice. The Lord Buddha said in His teaching in order to use for the individuals’ qualification. He is used the words “is Bhāvitakāyo” (Bodily Development) “Bhāvitasilo” (Moral Development) Bhāvitacitto (mental development) .and “Bhāvitapaññāyo” (intelligent development). The word “Bhāvana” when we use It as the adjective can be used into Bhāvita. is Bhāvitakāya means one who has the bodily development or already-trained, Bhāvitasila: one who has the moral development, Bhāvitacitta: one who has the mental development and “Bhāvitapaññāya”: one who has an intelligent development. If it a noun, it can be divided into 4 categories as follows:

- 1, Kāyabhāvanā : person is Bhāvitakāyo: the doer is the bodily development.
2. Silabhāvanā : person is Bhāvitasilo. The doer is the mental development
3. Cittabhāvanā : person is Bhāvitacitto The doer is the mental development.
4. Paññāyābhāvanā : person is Bhāvitapaññāyo. The doer is the intelligent development. (Phra Dhammapidok P.A. Payutto, 1997 : 51).

The four Buddhist Principles of Development are the valuable quality of people. Buddhism gives the importance to self-development and raise up the developed persons as the highest person , suitable for worshiping and to praise as such that results from the worth of the Four mental cultures that are the results of self-training

## An application of the Four Buddhist Principles of Development in order to make life-equality for the elderly persons

The principle of Buddhism emphasizes the creation of health or the state of happiness as a whole with the four systems of life, that is, body, society, mind, and wisdom by focusing on the development from the inner nature, namely to develop the mind for wisdom that impact on the life that associates with the outside nature both physically and socially. (Phramaha Tavee mahapanyo, 2013 : Abstract).

1. In developing the body or Kāyabhāvanā and association with the physical environments or materials can be practiced as to train the behaviors for application of senses of faculties such as seeing, hearing and eating with

mindfulness together with self-development continuously to make wisdom progress, good and valuable life. With consumption with usefulness of nutrition, enough for bodily requirement, it will support the body to be strong and good health in accordance with ages, to use the dressings, accommodations, technology as economic and the most usefulness. The dwellings will be stable, clean, and safety. The food and necessities can be easily bought, To have an opportunity to meet and talk with the others can be done and the activities can be performed with the learned persons such as Buddhist monks, physicians, persons with virtue etc.

2. The moral development or *Sīlabhāvanā* is associated with the social environment. It can be practiced by using five or 8 precepts as the foundation to train the behaviors in the right way and suitable for the family, community, and society in accordance with the principle, rules, regulation and law whether the types of the precepts should be observed or not, they must undertake the precepts by saying in order to pay attention to receive that type of precept for practicing until it becomes to be habitual and the way of his life and the activities, hobbies and honest occupation should be done by abstaining from the dishonest occupation such as cheating and deceiving etc. not to persecute and create the trouble for themselves, society and environment, and not to destroy the value and the quality of life including the ability to be self-reliant and to rely on others less.

3. In training the mental culture, mental development and mental training to be strong, stable and progressive with the diversity of virtues. The elderly persons are able to control their minds with the Tranquil and Insight meditation in order to make mind good quality, that is, to have the sublime state of mind, polite, gentle, honesty, gratefulness, shame of evil, afraid of evil, the mind with good health, that is, the mind consists of the strength, stability, effort, mindfulness, industry and good health consists of peace, fresh, cheerfulness, joyfulness, optimism, and to reinforce to learn the new things in training with meditation.

4. In training the wisdom, intelligent development is to create the knowledge, understanding, and the intuition of the truths. The elderly persons can practice in according to the Noble Eightfold Parts by practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness to develop the good quality of mind and good health of mind. When the mind that is finally developed will give up all desires, they contemplate to realize of the Three Characteristics of Existences, to penetrate the and to see the life consisting of 5 Aggregates, that is, impermanence, unhappiness and no-self not clinging to them and to realize of the Four Noble Truths, to penetrate the worldly conditions, not to be infatuated in the property and life. When facing the disappointment and separation, they can make peace easily and live with happiness. (Udom Chanpaiboon, 2013 : 24-32).

In conclusion, to create the equivalence of life for the elderly persons in the way of Buddhism has the principle of Dhamma that can be applied for life of the elderly persons, that is, physical development, mental development and wisdom development that are the concepts or the practical principles connective to good way of life and the right way according the normal law that is able to deliver the benefits that are the highest goals of life.

### **The model of activity in accordance with the four Buddhist Principles of Development for the elderly persons practicing to make the equality of life**

The four Buddhist Principles of Development are the principles of life-administration in the right way and self-development by selecting the activities to enhance the physical, moral, mental and wisdom development suitable for them including the groups organizing the activities or associating with the clubs that manage the activities to be wholesome and the right practice as follows:

1. The management of activities in accordance with *Kāyabhāvanā* : comfortable happiness

The elderly persons' ability to look after the physical health is to make the body to be strong, active and energy and to be able to respond the physical requirement in accordance with condition as appeared. The economics and necessary factors are sufficient without perils and dangers and to have environment that enhance the health, not to addict the drugs. (The Office of the Mental Health, 2012 : 13) The exercises that are admired to practice can be classified into various methods as follows:

1. The physical exercises
2. The muscle exercise
3. To train the endure in general is the most necessary training for the Elderly persons
4. The sport playing
5. In using the physical energy in daily life and hobbies

2. The management activities in accordance with *Sīlabhāvanā* : Funny happiness and aging gracefully.

The elderly persons' ability in selecting the joyful way of life, enjoyment by performing the activities results in the happy emotion with the purity of mind, active and the good quality of life. These activities can reduce the sorrowfulness, seriousness and anxiousness. The satisfaction in life, self-content, self-confidence, self-virtue, self-respect, self-encouragement, sympathy for others, benevolent, and participation in assisting others in society will occur. The models in managing the funny activities for the aging can be divided in various types as follows:

1. The moral preservation is done for the right behaviors

2. The systems for performance of occupation
3. To manage the regulation in using the four factors in order to live with Sufficiency
4. To accumulate the merits must be done in order to make the life progress and easy to search for the property in the future by making merit.
5. The suitable relationship with family and society

3. The management of mental culture (*Cittabhāvanā*): Bright happiness

To manage the activities of Bright happiness in the groups of aging will emphasize the encouragement and maintain the brain declination in various aspects such as the ability of aging in memory, the reasonable thought, communication for planning, and problems solution, ability in thinking as a whole ( Dependent Origination) including ability in management of various things efficiently in the groups of the elderly persons such as to retard the brain declination, efficiently and they must train the perception about various situations in the present and observe various things around themselves or from the pictures, to train the memory, reading, writing and the methods to exercise the brain etc. the important point is that the period of training will impact the retard of the brain declination. The models for management of activity in the elderly persons can be divided as follows:

1. Chanting and saluting are to increase the faith, merit, to heal the diseases for themselves by recitation and saluting before going to bed as usual.
2. Having mindfulness and heedlessness are to practice the daily activities and to perform various activities will not be wrong and not to cause the accident by living with mindfulness and without heedlessness in every aspect.
3. The purposes of the mental development are to make the mind peace, and stability. The greed, hatred and delusion will be reduced and the loving-kindness and compassion will increase.
4. The purposes of healing the mental health are to make good mental Health, not to be serious, worry and sorrow and to make the physical health in good condition by relaxation not to be worried about anything, when they feel serious they should find out the way of relaxation such as playing with the pets, physical exercises and to listen to music etc. it may protect the worry and depression.

4. The management of the aspect of *pāṇṇbhāvanā*: peace and happiness

The mental peach is one of factors of components in the aspect of the emotional clever that assists to carry on their life of the elderly persons happily by dividing the physical peace and mental happiness. The model of activities in developing the behavior of the elderly persons should comply with the physical and mental change and to encourage the elderly persons to live with suitability consisting of components as follows:

1. To prepare the readiness before entering the old age in order to live in the old age with the efficiency and to have happiness with the readiness

for the elderly persons in various aspects, that is, in the aspect of health, they should take care of it with carefulness in order to make the aging have good health, while in the aspect of mentality, they should preserve the precepts and practice meditation and develop the wisdom in order to make the elderly persons good quality.

2. The purposes of self-adjustment are to have relationship with others appropriately by adjusting their roles in the right way to avoid the glumness, complaint, boredom, the assistance from the off spring and others whenever it is necessary, to try to help and to participate in the activities with the family and the community and to create the good relationship among the others.

3. The purposes of the recreational activity are to do not feel lonely, confusion, active and enjoyment with the hobbies, interesting activities or special attitude to move the body, flexible exercises and to use meditation and wisdom for consideration.

4. The purposes of learning continuously are to develop the wisdom and the right understanding by leaning the new things and enjoyment feeling, with attention and endure.

5. To create the benefits for the society is to make feeling that the Elderly persons are useful and worthy for society and to have meaning by doing the activity services for the other persons.

In conclusion, the elderly persons can apply the principles of the Four Mental Cultures for the 4 models of activities, that is, joyfulness: the activity is to know how to select the appropriate factors for usage to develop themselves to be happy and dignified aging and the activity for knowing how to abstain from doing an evil, that is, bright happiness, the activity for knowing how to develop the behaviors agreeable with the physical and mental change, to know how to control the mental behaviors and the mind is developed with appropriation and the activity for knowing how to think, consider, and analysis and think in the right way and realize of his own nature and carry out their lives with the sufficiency and to have the right way of life in the high level, that is, to reach the ultimate reality of life.

## Conclusion

The balancing life of the elderly persons should be created, while in Buddhism, there are a lot of principles of Dhamma that should be applied for the elderly persons' life, that is, the physical, mental and wisdom development. All these are the guideline of thought and practice connective to the good way of life and the right way in the natural law that can result in the good benefits as the purpose of life such as to associate with the physical or material environment. These can be practiced as follows: With training the behaviors by using the sense-faculties such as seeing, hearing and eating with mindfulness together with self-development continuously. The association with social environment can be practiced by applying 5 or 8 precepts for the fundamental

training in the appropriate way with family, community and society according to the rules, regulation and law. In mental training to make it strong, stable and progressive with all virtues, the elderly persons can control the mind by practicing the Tranquil and Insight Meditation in order to have good quality of mind. In creation of knowledge, concepts, understanding and intuition of the truth, the elderly persons can train themselves in both the mundane and super mundane wisdom etc.

The elder persons can apply the principles of the four Buddhist Principles of Development for the models of activities in four happiness that, happiness: the activity knowing how to select the appropriate factors in self-development, funny happiness and bright aging. The activity knowing how to abstain from the evil, that is, bright happiness, the activity knowing how to develop the behaviors connective to the physical and mental change and to know how to control the mental behaviors, namely, the mental appropriate development, that is the peace-happiness and the activity knowing how to think, consider, analysis and to have the right conception and realize of self-nature, to live efficiently and to carry on their lives in the right way in the higher level, that is to say, to reach the ultimate reality of life.

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