



# **THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF MAKING HOLY WATER IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM**

**Phra Tai Issaradhammo (Dhammakij)**

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School  
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The Graduate School, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, has approved this thesis entitled “The Beliefs and Practices of Making Holy Water in Theravada Buddhism” as part of education according to its curriculum of Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

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### **Abstract**

This qualitative research has three objectives, namely: - 1. To study the origin and development of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism, 2. To study the process of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism, 3. To propose the impact of beliefs and practices of making holy water to Thai society. This thesis also use In-depth interview technique for collecting specific data from Buddhist scholars and analyze the results.

From the study, Research finding, it found that the making of holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism is the Buddha's strategy to make people get closer to religion practices; Water element is so physically vital to all forms of life, the study shown that chanting *Paritta* can heal people from mentally inside out, and with understanding of the *Sutta* in term of prevention, resolution and therapy through recitation. Finally, Holy water must be connected to Dhamma water that is the core of the Buddhism.



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**Phra Tai Issaradhammo**

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## Abbreviations

### Abbreviations of Scriptures

In this thesis, the researcher has referred various sources of both primary and secondary from Pali Canon (*Tipiṭaka*), Commentaries (*Atthakathās*), Sub-commentaries (*Tīkas*), Sub Sub-commentaries (*Anutīkas*), and so on. The system of abbreviations will be systematized as follows:

AA	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya Atthakatha</i>
BCE	Before Christ Era
B.E.	Buddhist Era
CBT	Common Buddhist Text
<i>DhA</i>	<i>Dhammapada Atthakatha</i>
<i>Dhp</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
<i>Dhs</i>	<i>Dhammasutta</i>
<i>J</i>	<i>Jātaka</i>
<i>Kh.</i>	<i>Khudakapātha</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
MCU	Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
<i>MP</i>	<i>Milindapañha</i>
PTS	Pali Text Society
<i>S</i>	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
<i>Sn</i>	<i>Sutta Nipāta</i>
Tr.	Translation
<i>Vin</i>	<i>Vinaya</i>

## Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Abbreviations	iv
<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and Significance of the Problems	1
1.2 Objectives of the Research	5
1.3 Statement of the problems	5
1.4 Scope of the Research	6
1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research	7
1.6 Review of Related Literature and Research Works	8
1.7 Research Methodology	11
1.8 Advantages Expected to Obtain from Research	12
<b>Chapter II: The Origin and Development of Making Holy Water</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 The Origin and Development of Making Holy water	13
2.1.1 The <i>Ratana Sutta</i> : The Origin of Making Holy Water in Early Buddhist Scriptures	14
2.1.2 Other Related Scriptures to Making of Holy Water	16
2.1.3 The Origin of Holy Water appear in Thai Culture	24
2.2 The Development of Making Holy Water in the Buddha's Time	25
2.3 The Development of Making Holy Water in the Present Time	26
<b>Chapter III: The Process of Making Holy Water in Theravada Buddhism</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 The Concept of Making Holy Water	28
3.2 The Meaning of Holy Water	29
3.3 The Purpose of Making Holy Water	30
3.3.1 The Purpose of Making Holy Water in the Buddha's Time	31
3.3.2 The Purpose of Making Holy Water in the	33



Present Time	
3.4 The Ways to Practice of Making Holy Water	34
3.4.1 The Ways to practice in the Buddha's Time	36
3.4.2 The Ways to practice in the Present Time	38
<b>Chapter IV: The Impact on Beliefs and Practices of Making Holy</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Water in Thai Society</b>	
4.1 An Overview of Holy Water in Thai Society	43
4.2 The Beliefs of Making Holy Water in the Buddha's Time and Present Time	43
4.2.1 Buddha's Time	44
4.2.1.1 Holy Water as Prevention of Devil	46
4.2.1.2 Holy Water as Prevention of Disease	47
4.2.2 Present Time	48
4.2.2.1 Holy Water as Prevention of Devil	49
4.2.2.2 Holy Water as Prevention of Disease	50
4.3 The Practices of Making Holy Water	50
4.3.1 Auspicious Function	51
4.3.2 Monks and Holy Water	52
4.4 Intrinsic Sense of Holy Water	54
4.4.1 Wrong View on Holy Water	56
4.4.2 Benefit of Holy Water	58
4.4.3 Buddhist's Attitude on Holy Water	61
4.4.4 Non-Buddhist's Attitude on Holy Water	63
4.5 Impact of Making Holy Water in Thai Society	63
4.5.1 Inner Perception through Thai People	64
4.5.2 Other Perception through Thai People	66
<b>Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion</b>	<b>69</b>
5.1 Conclusion	69
5.2 Suggestions	71
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Biography</b>	<b>77</b>

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problems

Buddhism is one of religions existing in the modern world, the Buddhists proved the Buddha doctrine for a thousand years. Some Patterns are observed as the original teaching which is the words of the Buddha or any sayings or teaching of the Buddha (*Buddhavacana*)<sup>1</sup> in a form of *Gāthā*; especially the Theravadin monks chanted the *Gāthā* to make holy water in some ceremonial events such as home blessing ceremony, birthday ceremony, and etc.

Buddhism is a religion that aims to teach the law of nature. The Lord Buddha acted himself as a center of treasury wisdom that everyone could apply his doctrine. Moreover, the doctrine after collecting and categorizing into a group of *Piṭakas* as the Three Baskets (*Tipiṭaka*): the Buddhist Canon, *Vinaya*, *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma*.

The only way to carry a message through the time for thousand years is oral tradition (*Mukhapātha*)<sup>2</sup>; the technique to remember all Buddha's teaching words by words, sentences by sentences without faults. This happened when the most venerable *Mahākassapa* wanted to sort out the doctrine; he decided to hold the first Buddhist council after The Lord Buddha passed away seven days. The possible *Gātha* or *Paritta* came from the oral tradition by Venerable *Ānanda* who took responsible for reciting *Sutta*. Normally it began with *Evamme sutam* (Thus I have heard) and the reason why Venerable *Ānanda* played the very important role was that he was the closest monk who looked after The Lord Buddha, wherever the Buddha taught the *Dhammas*, he

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<sup>1</sup> Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), **Dictionary of Buddhism**, 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, (Pakkret: S.R. Printing, 2008), p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

would come back to bestow the doctrine to his closest disciple. A lot of *Sutta* has perfectly been maintained in written language, the monks who are interested in memorizing all *Tipiṭaka* still exist in Myanmar nowadays. The *Tipiṭaka* expert monks can recite every syllable from *Tipiṭaka* and ones who could do that the Myanmar government would support their entire families according to the amazing talent like Venerable *Ānanda* made.

The belief of the sanctity was deep-seated to the Buddhists since the ancient time, appearing in biography of the Lord Buddha. The rituals from the Buddha time have been transmitted to the present time such as the Chronicle of the Holy Water (*Buddhamanta*); it is a part of any auspicious ceremony and it is made for happiness by just a sprinkle of holy water from the Buddhist monk. Particularly, more details of making holy water began in the city of *Vesālī*. It was clearly stated in *Ratana Sutta* that at one time the Lord Buddha was staying near *Veluvanaram Vihāra* in Rajagaha (Author's translation)<sup>3</sup> the making of the holy water in early Buddhism was firstly made by Venerable *Ānanda* in *Vesālī*. However, when traced back to examine the way of making holy water in early Buddhism during the Buddha time, the only *Ratana Sutta*<sup>4</sup> was used by the exalted one through the closest disciple, Venerable *Ānanda*. It was divided into 17 verses in length and also known as the discourse of the jewels found in the *Pāli Canon*; *Nipata* and *Khuddakapāṭha*. Such *Sutta* extols the characteristic of the Three *Ratana*, viz the enlightened One, the Teaching and the Noble Community of Disciples, these are counted as the Jewel of Buddhism.

From the *Sutta*, it is clear that the Buddha spoke the presence of *Ratana Sutta* and always ended with *Etena saccena suvatthi hotu* (One accounts of this truth, may there be happiness).

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<sup>3</sup> Phrarajarattanarangi (V.P. Veerayutto), (tr.), **Soo Dan Buddha oong, India-Nepal. Buddha bibliography study, Buddha mission, BuddhaDhama from merit making travel**, (Bangkok: 2016), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Kh.3;Sn. 39

The *Khuddakapāṭha* “Shorter Texts” cover minor discourses commonly used for chanting, e.g. *Mangala Sutta*, *Ratana Sutta*, *Karaṇīyametta Sutta*.<sup>5</sup> So, Pāli language was used to speak and teach by the Buddha. New monks in the modern society normally chant in routine life, the chanting activity is added in a day starting from morning chanting and evening chanting in *Uposatha*. Some Buddhists also go to temples to collect bottles of holy water and pieces of string over which the *Sutta* has been recited with great concentration. This also gives psychological strength and confidence to the users because it reminds them of the truth which was uttered in the *Sutta*, and which recalled the words of the Buddha.

The Buddha emphasized on the truth of life and explained reasonably. He repeated about the core of Buddhism, which is containing himself as a Buddha, his doctrine is *Dhamma* and lastly his *Ariya Saṅgha*. The *Paritta* can be variedly interpreted; namely, means: less, little, low, defense, guard, safeguard or totally means the great protection and shield.<sup>6</sup> In this point, it means verse of protection or safeguard; protective chant; holy stanzas<sup>7</sup> or to be guarded in order to protect from an evil as Buddhist’s belief and practice. Monk must recite and learn many *Parittas* to chant for making holy water. *Ratana Sutta* is widely known as an indispensable *Gāthā* to make holy water for both in early Buddhism and modern Thai society, the holy water will be useless if monks do not chant *Ratana Paritta* which every layman will know suddenly when the monks start chanting the first verse from *Yānīdha*.

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<sup>5</sup> Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto. **The Pali Canon what a Buddhist must know**, (Bangkok: Chenpen Publishing House, 2015), p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Ajarn Panyachaibangya, **Buddhapalitra (extended version)**, **Chaya-māngalaatthakakāthā**, (Bangkok: Dhamasapa, 2015), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), **Dictionary of Buddhism**, 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, (Pakkret: S.R. Printing, 2008), p. 359.

The background story of the *Ratana Sutta* occurred in the city of *Vesālī* where was being plagued by disease, non-human beings (*a-manussā*), famine and causing death especially to people in the city. Due to the presence of decaying corpses, the non-human beings began to haunt the city. This is the reason why the citizen sought the help of the Buddha who was living at *Rājagaha* under King Bimbisal's patronage. Thereupon the Lord delivered this *Ratana Sutta* to Venerable *Ānanda*, after that he took an alms bowl filled with water then took a tour around the city reciting the discourse as a mark of protection to the people of *Vesālī*. Venerable *Ānanda* sprinkled the sanctified water and led to the city's woes. As a consequence, the non-human beings were exorcised, the pestilence subsided. Then, he returned to the hall where the Buddha awaiting his arrival for three days. There the Buddha also recited the *Ratana* discourse all over again to teach *Vesālians*. The advantage of *Ratana Paritta* is obtaining a good fortune and escaping from obstacle. (Author's translation).<sup>8</sup>

The explanations of the making holy water story can be proved in the *Pāli* canon that the Lord Buddha taught *Ratana Sutta* to Venerable *Ānanda*. Moreover, the holy water story first appeared in *Vesālī* at the first evidence. So, to compare how differences of making holy water nowadays in modern Thai society are totally contrasted. Thai *Saṅgha* do not make holy water like Venerable *Ānanda* did.

Likewise, the pattern has changed through the period of time. Such as, numbers of *Parittas* have been added, the use of adapted material and the number of chanting monks are also elastic. Due to the invitation, the monks are varied in number, usually three monks in minimum. The classic number is nine according to the lucky number or may be more than that depends on the host indefinitely. The religious practice in modern Thai society was totally different in the Buddha time.

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<sup>8</sup> Phra Kandhasarabhivamsa, **Phrapalitradhamma**, 16<sup>th</sup> edition, (Bangkok: Sumanapublishing, 2550 B.E/2005), p. 18.

Only joyous occasion will be made of holy water or sometimes the use of holy water is for the people who are possessed by evils. When the ceremony starts, monks are invited to their home. On the other side, the host has to set up the location then arranges the Buddhist altar which contains a joss stick, candle, alms bowl, flowers and so on. The person who knows well in religious practice call a “grantor”, he will lead everyone to start ceremony properly; monks may recite seven *Paritta* (*Sattaparitta* or *Jularajaparitta*) to finish making holy water but sometimes the monks recite more longer up to twelve *Paritta* (*Tavatasaparitta* or *Māharajaparitta*)<sup>9</sup> to finish ceremony.

The use of protective spells variously known as *Paritta*, *Rakkhā*, *Manta*, *Dhāranī*, *Kavaca*, and etc. against various dangers has been a common practice among the Indians from very early time. The Buddha himself is said to have adopted the practice on several occasions. The public recitation of *Ratana Sutta*, *Vesālī* is the best-known instance.<sup>10</sup>

Literally, the research aims to study the origin and development of holy water and concepts of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism. The researcher focuses on the beliefs and practices how holy water in Thai society is really made in details.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Research

- 1.2.1 To study the origin and development of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism
- 1.2.2 To study the process of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism
- 1.2.3 To propose the impact of beliefs and practices of making holy water to Thai society

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<sup>9</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>10</sup> A.G.S. Kariyawasam, **Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Sri Lanka**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995), p. 51.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problems Desired to Know**

1.3.1 What is the origin and development of holy water?

1.3.2 What is the concept of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism?

1.3.3 How are the beliefs and practices of making holy water impact to Thai society?

### **1.4 Scope of the Research**

The scope of the research is stipulated into the following **three** dimensions:

#### **1.4.1 Scope of Sources of Data**

The researcher focuses on studying the *Pāli* canon in *Ratana Sutta* or The Jewel Discourse appears in *Saṃyutta nikāya*, *Khuddakapāṭha*. It describes how the Buddha gave permission to Venerable *Ānanda*. Moreover, *Ratana Sutta* widely appears in the sacred book of Buddhist chants and is available in many languages; for example, *Pāli*-Thai-English translation. No matter what, the *Sutta* is used in many countries around the world; the sounds must go the same way according to original *Pāli* text. The more story details are in *Theravāda* Buddhist commentaries (*Atthakathā*), the Buddhist scholastic book, the chanting book by Phrakru Arundhammarangsī and the academic sources.

#### **1.4.2 Scope of Content**

This research focuses on the teachings on *Ratana Sutta* that appeared in *Pāli* canon emphasizing on the making of holy water. Firstly, the researcher will examine the concept of making holy water in early Buddhism, to obtain the very detailed pattern, which can be found in commentary and the benefit use of holy water. Secondly, there are many patterns of making holy water in Modern Thai society. Monks still reserve chanting of *Ratana Sutta* in holy water making process and add more chanting up to twelve *Paritta* but the majority of Thai *Saṅgha* usually start chanting by *Mangala Sutta* and then follow by *Ratana Paritta* and so on. Added *Parittas* are also found in *Pāli* canon to support the length of time during chanting.

#### **1.4.3 Scope of Time**

The timing of this research has been set at 18 months. Starting from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 to January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019

#### **1.4.4 Scope of Population**

The population of which would constitute a significant part in this research consists of a group of monks and lay devotees. Interview focuses on obtaining authentic information. Population comprises of the following individuals.

- Ven. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of faculty of Buddhism of MCU.
- Ven. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hansa Dhammaso, Assistant to the Rector for Academic Affairs, Director of International Buddhist Study College.
- Ven. Phrasithawatchamethi, Vice Director of Asean Studies Centre of MCU.
- Ven. PhraWisudthiwaraphon, Assist Abbot of Thepthidaram Temple.
- Asst. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahatthanadull, Lecturer of International Buddhist Study College.

### **1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research**

In this research has terminologies related to the study. Thus in order to benefit the study, definitions are defined as follows:

**1.5.1 Holy water** is a reciting an incantation over water and pour in the alms bowl to exorcise spirits.

**1.5.2 The Teachings** refer to Buddhist doctrines related to Ratana Sutta.

**1.5.3 Pattern** stands for a use of chanting format differently from both eras based on early Buddhism and Thai society.

**1.5.4 Theravāda Buddhism** means the orthodox school of Buddhism which is based on the Tipiṭaka or Pali Canon.

**1.5.5 Paritta** is a protective tool strongly made by people and Intentionally claimed by speaker.

**1.5.6 Tipiṭaka** means the Translation Series of Pāli Canon from Pāli Text



Society.

**1.5.7 Commentaries** means the Translation Series of exegetical scriptures from Pāli Text Society.

**1.5.8 Belief** means something that is accepted to be true.

**1.5.9 Religious practice** refer to the Buddhist ritual. It has various ceremony based on Buddhist determination and Buddhist important days.

**1.5.10 Ratana Sutta** refer to jewel discourse which describe the Buddha, the Dhamma and the *Saṅgha* as the precious things to be worshipped.

**1.5.11 Impact of beliefs and practices of making holy water** means factors that have a strong effect on using holy water and its perception.

## **1.6 Review of Related Literature and Research Works**

The researcher has reviewed the literatures, information, together with research works that related to the study by categorizing them into Thai and English languages as follows:

### **I. English Language Literature**

**1.6.1 Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett** has underlined the significance of making holy water by its results in a book named “**The Sociology of Early Buddhism**”<sup>11</sup>

From the book, it can be inferred that Buddhism contains lots of social role of the monks. A holy water produced by its power will ensure a clear mind. Moreover, since the chanted verses are in classical *Theravāda* language of *Pāli*, most patrons, including the monk cannot understand it.

As is often the case with magical incantations throughout the world, the poet of the verses comes from its semantics but from its sound. The situation in which it is chanted, the ethical and ritual purity, as well as the meditative power of the chanter, and the intention and dedication of its listener.

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<sup>11</sup> Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, **The Sociology of Buddhism**, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2003)

**1.6.2 Common Buddhist text** has describe about chanting in a book name “**Guidance and insight from the Buddha**”<sup>12</sup>

From the book, *Paritta* was used to chant, these are seen to bring blessing and protection when devoutly chanted or listened to, especially when monks or nuns are chanting them. Their power is seen to lie in: their having the Buddha as source; their expressing the *Dhamma*; their being chanted by the *Saṅgha*; their bringing inspiring strength and alertness to the hearer; their drawing on the power of an asseveration.

Each section expresses the result of Chanting *Ratana Sutta* and explains the meaning of each verse. Clearly tell truly jewel of human life was the Buddha who claimed himself exquisite jewel, *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha* respectively as the Triple Gems.

**1.6.3 Bhikkhu Pesala**, wrote the book “**An Exposition of The Ratana Sutta**”<sup>13</sup>The Venerable explained the *Ratana Sutta* in each verse and give very clear meaning of the Buddha’s tempt to teach sentient being. The Lord aimed to teach deities and human beings to enter the supreme bliss (*Nibbāna*) starting from Stream-winning, Once returning, Non-returning, and *Arahantship*, respectively. He claimed that *Arahants* have no mental suffering, having stable morality, No reborn, Free from Doubt, Scrupulous integrity and no one more excellent than the Buddha.

To his understanding the *Ratana Sutta* means the collection of the Buddha teachings clearly explained in each verse, are beneficial towards *Deva* and mankind. Jewel discourse is a popular *Paritta* text because of by its name; Gems are very precious due to their great rarity.

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<sup>12</sup> Common Buddhist text, **Guidance and insight from the Buddha**. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyala University Press, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Pesala Bhikkhu, (tr.), **An Exposition of The Ratana sutta**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2013)

**1.6.4 Piyadassi Thera**, Ceylon monk, who anchored in the Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka, referring the concept of the *Paritta* in his article “**The Book of Protection**” which is an anthology of selected discourse of the Buddha compiled by the teacher of old, was originally meant as a handbook for newly ordained novice.

He said that in this connection it is interesting to observe the prevalence, in a Buddhist land, of listening to the recital of the *Dhamma* or the doctrine of the Buddha in order to avert illness or danger. This is showing the belief of the Buddhist that *Paritta* can protect everyone and he expresses the value of *Paritta*. However, Jewel discourse is one of *Paritta* will be used to chant as well.

## **II. Thai Language Literature**

**1.6.5 Phradhammakittivamsa (Thongdee Suradecho Pāli<sup>9</sup>)** has mentioned the meaning of holy water; is water via blessed ceremony which normally achieve chanting from monk in auspicious events or cast a spell on objects, not only by monks but also laymen. (Author’s translation)

From the Buddhist scholar, sacred water, blessed water is carried the same meaning of holy water. Generally, temples in Thailand do the holy water to distribute to everyone who believes in Buddha’s grace (*Buddhaguna*). Thais believe it can cure a malady, affliction and every possible symptom or specified as an alternative medicine. Besides, sometimes lave the whole body by blessed water took from the temple.

**1.6.6 Somdej Phrabuddhagosajara (P.A. Payutto)** has stated the extent of *Parittas*, There is an extra new composed *Parittas* then some chanting use as introduction, some insert amidst main *Paritta*, some continuing last ending.

From the work, it can be inferred that meaning and use of *Paritta* differ from its developing level of people since normal lays but aim to be a shield power to the pure ones use to grow delight. The standpoint brings heart of chanter and listener to be

faithful, delightful, exultant and happy throughout maintaining concentration to be ready in moral sense higher; were *Kusalabhāvanā* and *Cittabhāvanā*<sup>14</sup> (Author's translation).

His book, his method of explanation about the benefit of chanting *Paritta*, during chanting both monks and lays also gain vantage.<sup>15</sup>

**1.6.7 Ajarn Thanit Yoobodhi** mentioned the meaning “Kad” in Thai convey a lot of meaning such as interrupt or interfere. Sometimes it is used in the process of making water before chanting an original *Paritta*. (Author's translation)

From the book, it can be inferred chanting style while blessing water in modern Thai society. Senior monk who is the leader of the *Saṅgha* usually led the incantation. Use of interference Gāthā tells the story background of each Sutta or tells the advantages.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

This qualitative research work is a documentary research. The research methodology can be divided into six stages as follows:

### **1.7.1 Data Collection**

Collecting data from the primary source of English translations of *Tipiṭaka* in order to explore the body of knowledge of Making of holy water in Buddhist scriptures for accurate description. As well as the secondary source of Commentaries, Sub-

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<sup>14</sup> Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), **Dictionary of Buddhism**, 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, (Pakkret: S.R. Printing, 2008), p. 211.

<sup>15</sup> Ajarn Panyachaibangya, **Buddhapalitra (extended version)**, **Chayamāngalaatthakakāthā**, (Bangkok: Dhamasapa, 2015), pp. 28-29.

<sup>16</sup> Loc.cit.

commentaries, textbooks, research works, Buddhist journals, together with the new interpretation from modern scholars respectively both in Thai and English languages. This is to survey the viewpoint from later literatures in detailed explanation for clearer comprehension.

#### **1.7.2 Analysis and Synthesis**

Analyzing and synthesizing the raw data as well as systematizing the collected data in order to give a clear picture of making holy water in *Ratana sutta*.

#### **1.7.4 Outline Construction**

Constructing the overall outline of the work in all related dimensions corresponding to the objectives.

#### **1.7.5 Problem Discussion**

Discussing the problems encountered according to the significance of the studies.

#### **1.7.6 Conclusion and Suggestion**

Formulating conclusions, identifying significant research findings, and suggesting useful information for further research.

### **1.8 Advantages Expected to Obtain from the Research**

This research paper contributes to the advantages as follows:

**1.8.1** Acquisition of Body of knowledge about the origin and development of Holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism.

**1.8.2** Acquisition of Body of knowledge about the process of making holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism.

**1.8.3** Acquisition of Body of knowledge about the beliefs and practices of making holy water in Thai society.





# **THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF MAKING HOLY WATER IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM**

**Phra Tai Issaradhammo (Dhammakij)**

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
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## CHAPTER IV

### The Impact on Beliefs and Practices of Making Holy Water in Thai Society

#### 4.1 An Overview of Holy Water in Thai Society

Holy water is one part belong to Thai culture since ancient time, for more than seven hundred years in the period of Sukhothai, monk play very important role acted as sacred person who can use magical power and use many types of manta. Holy water is one form of those types and it is tangible, be able to feel the cold drops from sanctified water right away, So, it also widely use in everywhere no matter use in Royal palace or in rural household, still also be found use of Holy water.

The combination of the *Buddha-Dhamma* and holy water are simple made with people, less people do not know what really mean from sprinkling holy water. The process has been made through *Buddha-Dhamma* which is the fruit resulting from most intensive search conducted over a long period of time by a compassionate noble man whose mission was to help suffering humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Holy water is deep seated through mind system of Thais from generation to generation. Generally concerning with *Budhasasana* rituals until present time, Thai people lean on their own religion and count on trustworthiness, Thai society also held on Buddhist activity in auspicious day such as *Vesak* day, *Makha* day, *Asalha* day or weekly Buddhist holiday. Especially, the day that Buddhist people will absorb goodness from *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha* or all elements are counted as virtue, people will admire those triple gems to their mind too from activities but sometimes

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. K. Sri Dhammanada, **What Buddhist Believe**, (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, 2002), p. 80.

when they feel uncomfortable, they may go visit monk to get solution, pay homage to *Saṅgha* and sometimes get sprinkling of holy water, somebody asked for Buddha amulet for using in diary life as a *anusati* to warn their mind from improvident or negligent things.

Holy water commonly use before leaving home after discussing about Buddha doctrine with monks. Moreover, sometimes monk was invited to lay's home for chanting and making of holy water. No matter what Thais people did anything happen to their life since born until death, Thai people activities also connected. For example, if there is newcomer was born or somebody sore from severely disorders and need motivation, they may invite monk to their home for cure but even bad cases such as somebody died in their family, they will use monk as a head of Buddhist rituals to help them following by their belief. It is so hard to separate Thai society from Buddhist rituals especially holy water is quite profound in this era.

## **4.2 The Beliefs of Making Holy Water in the Buddha's Time and Present Time**

A strong belief about holy water in Buddha's period was believed that the Exalted One acted as representatives of sacred water. Holy water is a tool, which the Lord bestows to Venerable *Ānanda*, this is show how he uses to cherish mankind then lay people gain more motivation. It also reveal the true power of the Blessed one, the power of purifying doctrine and power of the *Saṅgha* as triple gems.

### **4.2.1 Buddha's Time**

This domination of the Buddha can eliminate wickedness, in this era, there is no monk invitation for making holy water in any home in the Buddha's time which is opposite in nowadays

Truly that the Lord Buddha intend to make mankind be free from suffering and he use The four noble truths to teach people to realize the suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and way to the cessation of suffering since he can erased all *kilesā* from his mind, the pureness mind becoming the gem that people seek for, once the precious gem arise the *Ratana sutta* is claims his achievement appearing *Vesālī* since occurring calamities and death. People do believe the results of what the Lord Buddha did, The *Buddharatana* is the first gem to heal any phobias because Buddhism is a beautiful gem of many facets, attracting people of diverse personalities. The gems have time tested methods that can benefit the truth seekers with their various levels of understanding and spiritual maturity.

The Enlightened one claimed his teaching as *Dhammaratana* because the *dhamma* is accessible everywhere. It is like space, It has no color,marks,or shape but it is valuable. It is rooted in ultimate goal, as it is completely unshakeable. This made people surely believe in what the Buddha taught, the meaning in *Ratana sutta* is aim to spread the goodness with the best teaching technique while Venerable *Ānanda* touring in the city. Anyone which believed the Buddha teaching is also counted as using *Dhamma* which is another gems to give to humanity. Moreover, the teaching should not be objects of clinging which compare *dhamma* to a raft that help one cross a river from an unsafe side to the safe, peaceful side which is nirvana;it is to be used for this, not to cling to once it has achieved its aim,<sup>2</sup> the *gāthā* that the lord's aim is a raft to help people from suffering which is a vehicle or tool to generate faith in lay people, the pure *dhammarattana* is fully occurred

*Saṅgha* gem is noble monk whose conducts are virtuous and pure. Their mind are calm and still permanently by nature, monk is the symbol of freedom who can teach the *Dhamma* correctly. One who ordained and turning back to worldly activities to be as

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<sup>2</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005), p. 228.

the faith center, when those three gems are met it is going to be *Ratana* that can help mankind, the Lord also glorify good disciples.

After *Vesālian* meet the triple gems as a refuge, the *Ratana sutta* was told to all the hearer both human and deva could attain the stream enterer (*Sotapanna*) at least and also the chronicle of making holy water was arisen as well, the process quite different from now but the core of the Buddha teaching remain unchanged.

#### 4.2.1.1 Holy Water as Prevention of Devil

Apparently seen in *Ratana sutta* that non-human broke the wall and stepped inside the city to eat corpse making people afraid of evils, The arrival of the Lord Buddha and Holy water from Venerable *Ānanda* was sprinkled all around the city's wall making non-humans no longer stay in this city, they all escaped through the city's gate as scrupulously described in the Commentary. Prevention of devil is not the foolish story, it is suggested by *Ratana Sutta* and this is not a fairy tales but it is supported by the Lord Buddha himself.<sup>3</sup> Thus, The Lord Buddha's comparison appeared in the greater discourse on the Simile of the Heartwood,<sup>4</sup> his will want to make a belief that holy water can be useable as a protection if understand the truth value of his willingness just like The Lord Buddha states suppose a man needing a heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood come to a great tree and he know part of the tree contains heartwood, sapwood, inner bark and outer bark.

It is reflected that holy water is useful toward lay people which can bring peace to society, the community come back to be happy. Moreover, in term of devil in the Buddha's time is people who affected viruses or bacteria and acted like a devil and

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Asst. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahattanadull, Lecturer of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, 1st edition, ( Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp. 286-290.

another assumption is non-human species which often appear in *Tipiṭaka* such as Giants, Hungry ghost, bad devas and etc.

#### 4.2.1.2 Holy Water as Prevention of Disease

The Buddha insisted on diseases in ancient India that there are three main kinds of serious illness; craving, starving and aging. For instance, craving is a sign of passion to really get something they wanted to. Starving is strongly feeling occurring in body when lack of foods as the Lord said, “Hunger is the worst illness”, compounded existence the worst suffering or ailment (*Dukhā*). If you ill, one or more medications may effect a cure and jeep one healthy for a period of time. So, the discomfort of hunger frequently returns in a few hours, no matter how much and what kind of food and drink is taken. To survive, one must continually fin nourishment. The illness of hunger will come back over and over again until the time of death. This may be the main reason that the Buddha remarked that hunger is the worst illness<sup>5</sup>. Human beings also fall in the law of nature, no one cannot stop changing due to *Anijja*. Once being a man who strive for living peacefully but everyday life was shorten because of aging, children cannot be no longer as they are, they always grow old it is because aging is one of the diseases or sicknesses.

According to the popular disease prevalent in Magadha which is Northern India in the Buddha’s era were: leprosy (*Kuttham*), ulceration (*gandho*), eczema (*kilaso*), consumption (*soso*), epilepsy (*apamaro*), Malaria (*ahivatakaroga* or snake-wind disease) and diabetes (*madhuragu*) were also commonly known as diseases. However, the aggregates of human being is the home of illness.

The Black Death which is the severe epidemic of the bubonic plague that broke out in *Vesālī* and killed many people in the city, the decaying corpse was putrefied everywhere and people need medicine to cure serious illness.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BH/bh117481.htm> (accessed to on 5 January 2018)

In *Ratana sutta* told that non-humans eat the decaying corpse and haunt the people, the arrival of the Lord Buddha and Venerable *Ānanda* were healed from bad diseases. However, in this case, the use of holy water as prevention of disease also appear in the *sutta*, after Ven. *Ananda* chanting *Ratana sutta* and sprinkling the holy water for three days, the black plaque is subsided.

#### **4.2.2 Present Time**

The way of making holy water and use of holy water in the present time is ancient belief for long time, the original process was unknown towards new generation of Buddhist but the making of holy water right now is the combination of Brahmanism and Buddhism, the rituals show how to use holy string while chanting *paritta* for more than twelve *suttas* which is wisely choose from *Tipiṭaka*.

People accept the use of holy water as the Buddhist norm, monk will sprinkle holy water around devotee's houses or even in some location such as school, office or even in every rooms in their house for prosperity and they do believe that it can wash away horrid things. Not only use of holy water as sprinkle to everywhere but also use for mixing in the bathtub, people believe that any forms of superstition or black magic would be disappeared because of the power of the Buddha.

In the modern world, educated person whoever learn *Dhamma* and study about *Tipiṭaka*, this group can analyze what is heartwood of using holy water. In *Dhammapada* said "A fool who has a sense of his foolishness is to that extent wise; but a fool who thinks he is wise is call a real fool". The wisdom of educated people can be classify to the three kind of wisdom: wisdom based on hearing is the simple method to gain more knowledge, to hear others knowledge-sharing is the core to understand each other, this is include how we gain knowledge from reading as well, wisdom based on reflection is how people reflect the real life events with rethinking in their mind, on the other hand, it will reveal the belief of holy water by their own idea, real wise will believe

the direct experience toward mind reflection, wisdom based on meditative development which highest goal for the wise to achieve what they was convinced by others, insight meditation is the path of meditative development<sup>6</sup>, wisdom is the highest form of the right view, monk who do meditation during chanting *ratana sutta* is now using *Jintāmayapañña* because monk is a noble disciple of the noble one; he possesses wisdom directed to arising and believing of the people.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4.2.2.1 Holy Water as Prevention of Devil

The protection of devil in present era is individual belief and use widely, some people believe that if they was possessed by devil must go to the temple in order to get the sacred drop of the holy water from the monk or participate in the time when the monks chanting the *Parittas*, by this far, main purposes just want to be wash away the bad senses from inside out and be protect by *Dhamma* barrier. The prevention of devil is directly done for comfortable mind and sometime the television broadcasting about this topic quite often then also appear in the newspaper too.

Mostly when people encounter with someone who was possessed by devil, they do not know what to do and they felt frightened more than realize to the law of cause and effect, somebody just got ill and they behave so eccentric. On the contrary, the innovation of medical profession can diagnose the symptoms more specifically than monk and fortune teller, so, when people don't have enough power of understanding, they will decide to use holy water as medium to expel those possessor's one. To see thing more clearly in this events must rely on the level of wisdom which encompass the right

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<sup>6</sup> Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2005), pp. 479-510.

<sup>7</sup> Common Buddhist text, *Guidance and insight from the Buddha*, (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyala University Press, 2017), p. 403.

view and right resolve factors of the path, actually the form of right view that go beyond right belief.<sup>8</sup>

If people will believe that holy water can expel ghost, it was led to their life background, some came from rural area and they still worship ancestor ghost in their home, they would believe that if anyway the ghost realm may communicate with human beings then their need the body, some villager insist that it was true in their own opinion, the spirit is formless and need of human form to communicate with living people in the world, once the devil take possession of forcefully that they don't want to go back to their realm. Hence, holy water will be very important to expel bad thing from human body, if the use of sacred water was successful, people will get happy as a rewards. Holy water must pair with *Dhamma* water under mind concentration bring back strength to human. This is a Thai's individual belief that the results of using holy water as prevention of the devil will be better.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4.2.2.2 Holy Water as Prevention of Disease**

Use of Holy water for prevention of critical illness is pretty hard to get good explanation in the present time because the innovation of science can be proved and detected the sickness more precisely in order to get proper treatment but this theorem is still exist. The adaption use of holy water consumption and utilization or sometime mix in the food and drink that they believe that it would be vanish. However, this is also be personal belief as well, people do rely on this procedures in such the way of remedy, some are healed but others not, at least they did it because of contented hear.

### **4.3 The Practices of Making Holy Water**

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<sup>8</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.



How to perform a ceremony concerning with holy water may do in temple especially in *Uposatha* hall or devotee's home when the monk got chanting invitation, the equipment of making of holy water are water bowl, some place use of alms bowl, candle and candle's stand which is use for attach with the bowl and control the drop of the candle's tear and it must fall into the prepared bowl only while chanting the *paritta*. Moreover, adding propitious flowers is needed to indicate lucky signs such as adding of lotus, water lily, rose, marigold, orchid, etc. or use of lucky leaves which commonly found around temple and home and also holy water grip, it use for watering to people who sitting around the ceremony after the monk finish chanting *paritta*.

Some areas may use of traditional drum for beating as a sign of the end of each *Paritta*, for instance, when the monk start chanting the *Paritta*, they would have a lay to take responsible for the drum, the drummer have to hit the drum at the end of each *Paritta* until finishing whole chanting ceremony. For being better professional, the devotee must request for praying which is beginning with *Vipatti*..., this verse will send the signal to the chief monk and start chanting *Pariita*.

### **4.3.1 Auspicious Function**

The Holy water was applied to use in auspicious ceremony such as matrimony, home blessing ceremony, birthday ceremony and etc. This brought new custom inviting monks, normally five or nine monks as a lucky number of a sign of happiness for chanting *paritta* at home. Thus, they like to make auspicious function within morning session until noon together with food and services such as transportation or having *dhamma* talk. A pair of chanting *paritta* and making of holy water are always be joint. Normally use of the third monks in the group who sitting orderly in setting place have to recite the *Pāli* verses as the invitation to the Deva :

Samantā cakka-vāḷesu atrāgacchantu devatā. Sad-dhammaṃ muni-rājassa suṇantu sagga-mokkha-daṃ.

Sagge kāme ca rūpe giri-sikhara-taṭe c' antalikkhe vimāne, Dīpe raṭṭhe ca gāme taru-vana-gahane geha-vatthumhi khetṭe Bhummā c' āyantu devā jala-thala-visame yakkha-gandhabba-nāgā. Tiṭṭhantā santike yaṃ muni-vara-vacanaṃ sādhave me suṇantu.

Dhamma-ssavanakālo ayam bhadantā.

Dhamma-ssavanakālo ayam bhadantā.

Dhamma-ssavanakālo ayam bhadantā.

After reciting invitation to the *Deva*, chief monk will start chanting *Sattaparitta* (seven *paritta*) and *tavatasaparitta* (twelve *paritta*) continuously. So, how long of the ceremony depending on devotee's requested. When monks finished doing all holy making process by reciting *paritta*, Monk's leader will stand up and spray the holy water to people's head or sometimes softly hit the head toward people in the setting ceremony for motivating will power, courage, enthusiasm and to make a strength heart throughout sacred water. A part of Holy water may be used in the ceremony and the rest of the remaining holy water will be kept by the house's owner for future use, However, in the auspicious function is not complicated while making of holy water, devotees who joined in this event is sitting properly and put the palms of the hands together in salute.

### **4.3.2 Monks and Holy Water**

Since the Buddha time, When the noble one not yet enlightened, once he fought with the *Māra* underneath the Bodhi tree, he recalled to the past life whenever every time he poured water onto the ground for making a wish, suddenly the goddess of earth appear in front of him and squeeze a bun then the water flow from the goddess's hair and wipe all devils away from the battlefield, this proved that water is so important to

living things.<sup>10</sup> From there, Monk and holy water was come together, any monk activities was counted as sacred event toward devotee's eyes. On the contrary, the folks adhere to the chronicle of Holy water by Venerable *Ānanda* who healed all people in the city and first use of holy water in the world of Buddhism by the Buddha's advice in *Vesāli* city. Nowadays *Therevāda* monk still uses the holy water as a medium gathering faith from Buddhist. The four assembling contains *Bhikkhu* (*Buddhist monk*), *Bhikkhunī* (*Buddhist nun*), *Upāsaka* (male devotee) and *Upāsikā* (female devotee) or can be separated into two sides were Monk and lay people.

Monks and holy water were paired by nature, not just a monk but also priest and fortune teller as well. It is because of lack of trustworthiness and the only way to help them is those services. When people encounter with difficulties, they need monks. If they need money then meet businessman, if they need to sell goods and products then meet marketing expert. So, if they want to be part of political affairs, they would meet politician. Conversely, lays need to meet monks mean they feel uncomfortable and face with suffering, in the monk's side who practice insight meditation can share the loving-kindness to other people because of the power of kindheartedness provide confidence for overcoming the obstacles.<sup>11</sup>

Monks normally do ceremonial services such as chanting, making of holy water, giving *Dhamma* talk and also give back congratulations or any concerned activities because of acting as assumed monk (not yet enlighten one). Besides, lay people or as a host of ceremony who are taken responsible for taking care all processes the ceremony. For instance, when the monk sprinkle the holy water, lay must hold the alms bowl and walk following by chief monk. Eventually if no monk taking responsible of sprinkle holy water, lay people may not be accepted because monk and holy water are come

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahāso, Director of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

together. Actually by doing this quite serious in attention, *Bhikkhu* is one of triple gems who observed *Sīla* more than lays, this reason would make monk become more suitable for cherish people than others.

The simile of holy water is like a fisherman, who has a tool to catch fish, monks without a strategy and holy water can compare with fisherman who goes in the middle of the ocean to catch the fish but without net or catching fish instruments, monk and holy water are quite important in somehow.<sup>12</sup>

*Paritta* is chanting for the protection by monks, also holy water was made by monk to support devotee's need, monks and holy water shared good relation in Thai society whoever got ill or got the nightmare, sprinkle some drop of holy water may help them according to the individual's aspect, every religion distribute the same way if they strongly believe in faith.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4.4 Intrinsic sense of Holy Water**

The use of holy water are variant, the changing of normal water throughout reciting *paritta* to become holy water. It was added values in its own water and had effects into the mental level. Holy water is a drop of hope of people who wanted to bathe and felt joyful. Hence, Water is so essential for all form of life; Holy water shared the same belief with Brahmanism because water is a symbol of religion rituals and especially in Thailand, which derived from ancient Indian culture.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Interview with Asst. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahattanadul, Lecturer of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

The Intrinsic sense of Holy water in Royal monarch of Thailand is so vital in the royal coronation ceremony; the sacred sources of Holy water since the King RAMA VI are still used in the current reign. For the first coronation use the water source like in the fifth reign but the second coronation will use from seven sources of sacred water are as following;<sup>15</sup>

1. Pa Sak River, Tha Lab District, Saraburi province.
2. Ta-le Keaw and Sra-Keaw, Phitsanolk province.
3. Nam-Chok-Chom-Phu, Num-Bor-Keaw, Num-Bor-Thong, District of Sawankalok.
4. Nakorn Chai-Sri River, Bang-Keaw District, City of Nakorn Chai-Sri.
5. Na-Phra-Lan Pond, Wat Se-Ma-Chai Pond, Wat Se-Ma-Meuang pond, Wat Pa-Tu-Khao Pond, Khao-Maha-Chai Riverlet and Pak-Nakaraj Pond, Nakornsithammarat province.
6. Nam-Thip Pond, Lampoon province.
7. Wat-That-Pa-Nom Pond, Nakornpanom province.

In addition, all holy waters were brought to primary temples in ten regions, which are:

1. Wat Barommthat, Chainat city, Nakornsawan province.
2. Wat Mahathat, Phetchaboon city, Phetchaboon province
3. Wat Krang, Nakornratchasima, Nokornratchasima province.
4. Wat Sithong, Ubonratchathani, Northeastern part of Thailand.
5. Wat Sothron, Chacheongsao, Prachinburi region.
6. Wat Plub, Chantaburi city.
7. Wat Taneenarasamosorn, Pattani province.
8. Wat Phrathong, Thalang city, Phuket province.
9. Wat Phrathat, Chiya city, Chumpon region.

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<sup>15</sup> Termsri Ladawan, "Holy Water sources for coronation", **Matichon**, (18 January 2019)  
: A1.

10. Wat PhraMahathat, Phetchaburi city, Ratchaburi region.

The above mentioned about use of holy water in Royal palace which clarify that rituals make people adjacent to religions and this is a psychological sample for making people get contented heart<sup>16</sup>.in some occasions, it enhances the chance to complete success.

#### 4.4.1 Wrong View on Holy Water

The misinterpretation of holy water as the sacred drops could heal all sicknesses still existed in Thai society, mistaken notion usually believe without careful consideration and not use of intelligence. Majority of Buddhists have wrong belief about holy water. The wrong view may appear without consideration just like faith and wisdom, faith in the sense of trustful confidence then once people believe about holy water is relying on quality more of the heart than the cognitive belief. It was occurred only in Buddhism more than other religions, sometime the level of faith and wisdom are inconstant<sup>17</sup>, about the nature of faith as show in *Milindapañha* states that it lead to calm and encourage one to seek attain the stages of spiritual perfection. Moreover, faith never enough leading the wrong perception arise on holy water but when the truly faith is arise, it suspends the hindrances like a water clearing gem.<sup>18</sup>

A faith needs to be guided by wisdom, and the cognitive quality of wisdom needs grounding by the heart quality and commitment of faith.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the faculties of faith, vigor, mindfulness, meditative concentration and wisdom, So, follow the noble

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with PhraWisudthiwaraphon, Assistant Abbot of Thepthidaram Temple, 18 January 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Common Buddhist text, **Guidance and insight from the Buddha**, (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyala University Press, 2017), p. 261.

<sup>18</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>19</sup> Loc.cit.

one teaching in *Kītāgiri sutta*<sup>20</sup> explain what kind of person is a faith-follower?, it is states that some person does not contact with the body and abide in those liberations that are peaceful and immaterial, transcending forms, and his taints are not yet destroy by his seeing with wisdom.<sup>21</sup>

If someone never believes in miracle of holy water then they all judge that this is a foolish circumstance but if they just believe, they have got the advantages of holy water.<sup>22</sup> On the Contrary, the holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism is not use for sin confession like in Christianity<sup>23</sup> ; water cannot cleanse the sin away from mind, as a Buddhist's perspective, we refuse this action, this is not the Buddha's doctrine. In rural area found that people drank the impure water, which is contaminated in holy water, and become poison.

From in-depth interview for all interviewees found out that the vocabularies that relate to the wrong view of holy water which are: nonsense, foolish, idiot, irrational, disbelieve, impossible, hoax, lie, ignorant, credulous, ghost, superstition and etc.

Researcher collected some sentences towards the wrong view of holy water, for example,

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<sup>20</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha**, 1st edition, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp. 577-584.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 582.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof.Dr.Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Phrasithawatchamethi, Vice.Director of Asean Studies Center of MCU, 18 January 2019.

“Nowadays, monks make of holy water just emphasize on good fortune, four requisites and money and lead the way to ignore the *Viniya* rule, lastly, monks become an enchanter.”<sup>24</sup>

“Because of the belief that holy water can prevent misfortune especially in the countryside, if monks refuse to do their request, people may scold to the monk, holy water is people’s volition.”<sup>25</sup>

This passage show very wrong view of holy water that people never emphasize on the *paritta* but misunderstand on what the Buddha teaching, However, people focus on miracle of using holy water instead.

As Buddhism evolved, just as gods and deities were taken in from the beliefs and mythologies of the society,<sup>26</sup> the entire gamut of these popular beliefs as well as rites, ceremonies and magical practices. These are idea, which reconcile mixing with the intellectual rationalism and the ethical idealism of the teaching of the Buddha.

#### **4.4.2 Benefits of Holy Water**

The usefulness of holy water is not more than pleasantness or obtain good comfortableness, Holy water is a representative of good things, and the adaptation use of holy water can increase will. Sacred water is an essential part of ceremony, human firmly believes that water is important matter for utilization and consumption, which nourishes all form of life and pure water, was used to make holy water.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with PhraWisudthiwaraphon, Assistant Abbot of Thepthidaram Temple, 18 January 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Ananda W. P. Guruge, **Buddhism, The Religion and its culture**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Sri Lanka: Sridevi Printing works, 1984), pp. 171-172.



In all schools of Buddhism, chanting, or listening to it, is often used as a form of protection. In Southern Buddhism, chanted passages called *paritta*'s, or "safety-runes" are used.<sup>27</sup> Most are excerpts from the *Pāli* scripture; it hardly says holy water derived from chanting process will benefit to people, within these limits, the working of *parittas* is seen as involving a number of factors.

Plenty of benefits can be seen, firstly, to chant or listen to a *paritta* is soothing and leads to self-confidence and a calm, pure mind, due to both its sound-quality and the meaning. As the mind is in a healthier state, this may cure psychosomatic illnesses, or make a person more alert and better at avoiding the dangers of life<sup>28</sup>. Secondly, chanting for the monks, who expresses lovingkindness to all beings, is thought to calm down a hostile person, animal or ghost, making them better disposed towards the chanter and listeners. Thirdly, as well as making new "merit", *paritta* chanting is thought to stimulate past "merit into bringing some of some good results immediately.

The other benefit of holy water was when people got sprinkled the water will make inner mind more stronger and stable because the values of the triple gems as the *Buddhānusati*, *Dhammānusati* and *Sanghānusati* are always remind. When they received a touch of water may feel lively as a natural qualification of liquid, generally holy water can be easily found in the monastery nearby Thai society, at least this factors can be accessible of people more easily and be familiar with temple and monk. So, the purposes from chanting *Ratana sutta* for making holy water have several benefits as stated in *sutta*. For instance, for the catastrophe protection, for mindful accomplishment and for erasing sufferings and sicknesses.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Harvey, **An Introduction to Buddhism Teachings, history and practices**, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1990), p. 181.

<sup>28</sup> Loc.,cit

<sup>29</sup> Phrabrahma Bundit, **The power of Paritta**, (tr.) By Venerable Ty Issaradhammo, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, (Bangkok:Wat Prayoon,2542/1997), pp. 6-7.

*Manta* means protection which is *Ratana sutta* must relate with holy water, The Blessed One who fully enlightened, endowed with clear vision and virtuous conduct, sublime and be the knower of the world, act as incomparable leader of men to be tamed and be the teacher of god and men, this show the qualification of the owner of *Ratana sutta* can certainly guarantee the benefit of the holy water, As like the ancient said Chanting is like apply an ointment but mediation is like taking pill, chanting *paritta* itself is tranquil meditation, the benefit is peaceful mind because when people start chanting, the stage of mind is not unquiet but when they pay attention on *gāthā*, they become so calm, this is a strategy of the Lord Buddha and then he added insight meditation into it, this stage is not just singing like a early bird but chanting for bring the Buddha doctrine to practice.<sup>30</sup>

People must have a belief, Do you believe it? if yes, the holy water could help you certainly, No matter use for remedy or bath the holy water, if believing in that action, you've got the benefit of holy water.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the whole interview session, the researcher comes up with **NADĪ** model (N-A-D-I MODEL), which describe the benefit of holy water in the single alphabet from the word "*Nadī*" which means "River", and the river is the symbol of long running water. However, The Assumption under researcher's revision combines all words, which occur in the universe of making of holy water but in the model just gather only good meaning words to scope the benefit of holy water. Thus, the hidden meaning in the word "**NADĪ**" is collected from all interviewees as following:

"N" Stand for necessity, norm, narrative.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahāso, Director of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of Faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

“A” Stand for attitude, appreciate, awareness.

“D” Stand for develops, defense, deliberate.

“I” Stand for impression, insurance, involve.

The interpretation of “N” conveys good meaning of using holy water because of water is very necessary for life. In addition, the making of holy water in our Buddhist’s ceremony is a norm, holy water is a must process to do for devotee’s need. Lastly, the narrative behind the *Paritta* chanting also have an evidence show in *Ratana Sutta* and good teaching in each chanting verses.

The interpretation of “A” reflect the attitude of people toward holy water and people appreciate in the drop of *Buddhamanta* in their way but the use of holy water must be aware of misuse of an objects as well.

The interpretation of “D” is results of using holy water while receiving the water must develop the Mind Set and must be deliberate to the action. In accordance to *paritta* itself is defense the bad luck.

The interpretation of “I” is every time when people invite monks to their home to make holy water must end up with impression and be involved in the ceremony. It is guaranteed the insurance in the mental level.

#### **4.4.3 Buddhist Attitude on Holy Water**

Buddhist have long relation with holy water for a long time and appear familiar by our own eyes, Some temple may provide big holy water basin for giving to people who want to fill the water in the bottle for future use, They also believed that water which processed by monk whoever have strong concentration will make holy water more hallowed and there are very influential towards disciples of renowned monks. From interview found that holy water is the good translation of mantra which in form of media substance is made of water, In Buddhism the water will not holy by itself but by putting

something from mental site or from the holy one that is Buddhist monks. The true meaning of holy water by emphasize on chanting, meditation and then put some power into the water, they will use this water as holy substance in order for auspicious life.<sup>32</sup>

The intention of holy water must go back to the source of the sacred drop is *Ratana sutta*, when the people face with hard time, they need encouragement in their life style, somebody believe in woods, somebody believe the sun as a refuge when they are fear of something, This is not wrong but just need a shelter for living life.<sup>33</sup>

*Vesālī* city is flatland is plentiful of food but Magadha's terrain is mountain embrace with paddle field, in term of fertility, *Vesālian* is higher than in standard of living but when they faced with problem, it make people down that why The King *Litchavis* must invite the Lord Buddha to please their citizens in order to gain a healthy mind to pay homage to the Lord Buddha as a refuge, to pay homage to the *Dhamma* as a refuge and to pay homage to the monk as a refuge and totally becoming three *ratana* as a milestone. Since the Buddha's time until present time, if the Buddhist attitude on the discourse of jewel remain unchanged, the holy water is still be in Buddhist's mind as well because *Ratana sutta* is the foundation of conviction, people still firmly believe as a triple gems and become tidy society, the Buddhist scholar review that the attitude on holy water under the action of Venerable *Ānanda* via the noble one is *Satta Aparihāniya-dhamma*(seven conditions welfare), as described in *Mahā Parinibbāna sutta*.

At that time the Venerable *Ānanda* was standing behind the Blessed One, fanning him, and the Blessed One addressed the Venerable *Ānanda* thus:” What have you heard,

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Asst. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahattanadull, Lecturer of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahāso, Director of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

*Ānanda*: Do the *Vajjians* have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended?" I have heard Lord, that this is so."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the Buddha in the course of the conversation inquired of *Ānanda* whether the *Vajjians* were living up to the seven conditions of welfare, *Ānanda* answered in the affirmative. The noble one admires the seven condition of welfare as the tool to imperishable *Dhamma*. From the *Ratana sutta* disclose the attitude of the King Lichavis as well because they need a holy water to exclude the devil out from the city, once all the black plaque was subsided, *Litchavīs* still follow *Satta Aparihāniya-dhamma* (seven conditions welfare). For example, they hold full and frequent public assemblies, etc. Nevertheless, no matter the city encounter with unfortunate event, The King's attitude on holy water still show in the *Ratana sutta*.

*Phrarajpariyattimuni (Thieb Siriñāno)* has quoted the sentence through from interview that "Holy water will be sacred and powerful depending on the receivers if their thoughts are holy, everything would be possible."<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Non Buddhist's Attitude on Holy Water

Not only Buddhist use of holy water but also Christianity has holy water as well, other religion adherent's use of sacred water as the same way such as expel a ghost or devil. This group of people thought that holy water in *Theravāda* Buddhism is a drop of faith that would bring good fortune to the user and other concerned people. However, non-Buddhist seems believing that the format and adoption of holy water may variant because in *Therevāda* Buddhism, monk is taking care of making holy water and being a master of ceremony as always. On the contrary, in Christianity having a priest instead

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<sup>34</sup> Sister Vajira and Francis Story, **Last Days of The Buddha**, 2nd Edition, (Kandy; Buddhist Publication society, 2015), pp. 4-6.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

of Buddhist monk for playing important role to make a holy water and around the church is quite like in Buddhist monastery because holy water can be found in this location and they serve this service to their practitioners when they feel grieved and sorrowed or need of use in such a way they want.

#### **4.5 Impact of Holy Water in Thai Society**

Holy water which came from *Paritta* chanting in Thai society having impact toward mental side of people greatly because Thais have a strong believe that holy water from monk who are very pay attention for holy water production can be wash away catastrophe alike in *Ratana Sutta*. As a matter of fact, most of the Thais never know the background of *Ratana Sutta* anymore or having few who once ordained as a monk and study a little bit about this. They never ever even know the original making of the holy water properly. This action account for misunderstanding toward the Lord Buddha's purposes. Impact on Buddhist attitude have many dimension whether good or bad, the Buddha purposes lay down fundamental rules for protecting the monks for misbehave action, Some area especially in rural community, if monks refuse to make holy water for them, so, devotees will force monk to do it, this was so impact to people's mind, Some claimed that Thai society is foolish and believe in superstition, Actually, during the making of holy water is the way to make the mind's calm, *Buddhamantra* is shared the wisdom to the user which never lure people to the dark side but bright side instead, In *Samaññaphala Sutta*, The Buddha states that monks who made people foolish with any superstition methods is ineffective disciple but nowadays monk making of holy water is only for moral support, The interpretation from the *Sutta* must mildly translate the truth meaning of the Noble one's teaching.<sup>36</sup>

##### **4.5.1 Inner Perception through Thai People**

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

The sensation towards Thais are divided into two main groups, firstly is credulous people which obey from ancient time and never realize about how to make holy water or how to use it. People do believe from their primogenitors generation through generation, the ancestor taught and told through the lineage and never oppose the ritual, they follow with pleasure and for comfortableness. Holy water was seated in Thai society and given by holy monk as they believe.

Secondly, is the group of educated people who hard to believe this kind of holy objects especially in the present era when the technological issue can be prove by scientific method. These group can be categorized in the wisdom class, people is so modern and look this story as a foolish and they do not want to be ignorant person, the way of belief must rely on the law of the cause and effect. To be concise in the inner perception is to make people get ensuring mind<sup>37</sup> and the holy water is sacred by itself.<sup>38</sup>

The rituals make people close to the religion, if they are ignored it will make people become estranged. So, Chanting is a part of *Bhavānā*, this equation is making mind brighter starting from *Dāna*, *Sīla* and *Bhavānā* + never be reckless, these are truly the Buddha doctrine and just be conscious with the moment.<sup>39</sup>

Through Thai's perspective toward miracle of using holy water in household, this is irrational explanation or in the sense of supernatural phenomena. There are two groups of people consisting of believer and non-believer in Thai society. The most Venerable P.A. *Payutto* has said that Believers may then force non-believers into

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phramaha Hansa Dhammahāso, Director of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Asst. Prof. Dr. Sanu Mahattanadull, Lecturer of International Buddhist Study College, 30 October 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Phrasithawatchamethi, Vice.Director of Asean Studies Center of MCU, 18 January 2019.

adopting a particular faith. Conversely, the supernatural exists primarily as a set of beliefs in the minds of non-awakened person, and these beliefs are liable to fluctuation. Some people originally repudiate the supernatural and look upon believers with contempt, but after they have what they believe to be a mystical experience their perspective shifts completely and they become zealous believers.

Because of matters concerning the supernatural and improvable, people's attitude and relationship to these things are crucial. And because these things exist primarily as a set of beliefs in people's minds, the particular belief in either the existence or non existence of these things is of minor importance.<sup>40</sup>

Holy water may contain psychic power from the chanter during the concentration of Samadhi. Thus, The Lord Buddha classified thee psychic powers as one of the three kinds of miracles (pāṭihāriya).<sup>41</sup>:

1. Iddhi-pāṭihāriya:the miracle of performing psychic powers.
2. Ādesanā-pāṭihāriya: the miracle of mind reading.
3. Anusāsani-pāṭihāriya: the miracle of instruction: the teaching of truth, which leads to true insight and fulfillment.

The making of holy water through people's perception can be all miracles in above state but the true form of miracle water is *Dhamma* water, which can teach people for fulfill need, The Buddha goes on to say that of the three kinds of miracles, he disfavors psychic powers and mind-reading, because he sees their potential harm: when hearing about these things, those who believe in their validity become further convinced, while those who are skeptical den their validity. They may claim that a monk who performs

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<sup>40</sup> P.A.Payutto, **Buddhadhamma**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Bangkok: Sahadhammika, 2017) , pp. 711-713.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 715.



these feats has resorted to using a magical charm, a mind-reading charm, or some other trick. This disparity of opinion is followed by arguments and disagreements.

The Buddha then explains the meaning and value of the miracle of instruction, saying that it can be applied and its benefits realized by everyone, until one reaches knowledge of the destruction of the taints, which is the goal of Buddhism.<sup>42</sup> However, the reason beyond the chronicle of making of holy water.

#### **4.5.2 Other Perception through Thai People**

Some Thais quoted on the use of holy water as a superstition, they brought the holy water for dispelling bad luck then reciting for worship the nine planets which are found in Hinduism such as sun deva, moon deva, Brihasapati deva, Shani deva, Budha deva, Shukra deva, Angaraka deva, Rahu asura and Kethu asura. Buddhism in Thailand is sharing the platform with Hinduism and adopt of Hindi tradition into their own tradition, the reason may come from *Siddhartha's* family respect the Hinduism since the Buddhism not yet happen. In other words, it is the combination of Brahman, according to the Vedas, the power value of all nine planets is one hundred and eight (108). So, the power values of Sunday(sun) is six, Monday(moon) is fifteen, Brihasapati deva is nineteen, Shani deva is ten, Budha deva is seventeen, Shukra deva is twenty one, Ankaraka deva is eight, Rahu asura is twelve and Kethu asura is nine. So, this number of the power values of each deva in Hinduism are very popular for people who the birthday is match with the date and will chant the *Paritta* according to the number of each day. For example, if whoever was born on the Sunday, they must chant the *Paritta* six times. Chanting ceremony may come with making of holy water and distribute to the people at the end.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 717.

The evidence was found in *Dhammapada* that reciting the *Paritta* can increase life span, In the story of “The Lad Whose years Increased”<sup>43</sup>, In the text state that the teacher recited the protective texts all night long, with the result that when the seven days had elapsed, Avaruddhaka failed to get the boy. Indeed, when the dawn of the eighth day rose, they brought the boy and caused him to make obeisance to the teacher. Said the teacher, “Live Long!” “Sir Gotama, how long will the boy live?” “For a hundred and twenty years, Brahman.” So they gave him a name *Āyuvaddhana*.

The recitation of the *Sutta* that is the word of the Lord Buddha but the use of holy water is a touchable medium. Actually with or without water are doesn't matter and the way to make holy water also can use any *Sutta* as well, this is not require even *Ratana Sutta* too.<sup>44</sup> The perception of Thai people remain unchanged toward holy water, when the time flies, *Paritta* chanting alters the format, each Theravada countries have their own style as *Phrasithawatchamethi* (Chana *Dhammadacho*) has quoted that “Buddhism, Brahmanism, Animism are interweaved altogether which shared local tradition + Buddhist tradition=Thai tradition.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Eugene Watson Burlingame, **Buddhist Legends**, 5th Edition, (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995), pp. 235-237.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phrarajpariyattimuni, Dean of faculty of Buddhism of MCU, 17 January 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Phrasithawatchamethi, Vice.Director of Asean Studies Center of MCU, 18 January 2019.



## CHAPTER V

### Conclusion and Suggestions

#### 5.1 Conclusion

Holy water from the beginning of the long narration from *Ratana Sutta* has a hidden clues to prove what the real benefits use of *paritta*, since the origin of development of making holy water found in early Buddhist scriptures occurring in *Vesālī* city, The Lord Buddha was invited from the Kings *Lichavīs* to please all citizens, at that time once the Noble One arrive at the front city's gate, Venerable *Ānanda* was bestowed *Ratana Paritta* (Discourse of the Jewels) from the Lord Buddha, He began to sprinkle the Holy water expelling devils and stop spreading of the plague. This evidence, researcher found out that this is the first making of holy water in world of Buddhism and the purposes of making holy water are protection, happiness, good fortune and etc.

The Development from *ratana sutta* became indispensable *paritta* to make holy water in present time. However, The recitation has been added more discourses which are *Satta Paritta* (7 protections) and *Tavatasa Paritta* (12 protections), this long chanting is popularly use in Thai society or especially in *Theravāda* tradition.

Furthermore, the concept of holy water is tactical pattern of the Buddha's teachings in term of water is so vital in life and the touch of sprinkle water will make people delight. During the Buddha time, the making of the holy water is totally different comparing to present time according to Venerable *Ānanda* recalled the past Buddha's virtue such as 30 perfections (*pāramī*), *Buddha cariyā*, 9 *lokuttara dhamma* and so on.

On the contrary, people still believe in the miracle of the holy water such as prevent of devils and diseases, from the analysis found out that holy water is a must pair with

monks and use for auspicious ceremony such as home blessing ceremony, high ordination ceremony, birthday ceremony, marry and etc.

Researcher used interview technique to gather raw data for reflecting the Buddhist attitude about holy water both scholar monks and layman, the perception of people come out differently two aspects. Firstly, the believer who follow the norm from old generation and never suspect the origin of the holy water and *paritta* chanting but remain good in faith. Secondly, the disbeliever who mainly educated one was born in modern world, this group of people shared principle of rationality.

Under careful evaluation, researcher has an idea tighten the core value of holy water from all interviewees and select some words from interview then divide into 2 groups which are good meaning words and poor meaning words, two set of vocabularies can indicate the viewpoint measurement toward holy water in Thai society. In addition to the long study, researcher applied **N-A-D-Ī MODEL** for using to use properly of holy water with fully understanding and rationality. In each alphabet behind the word *nadī* is various, only the selected word from hundred words with initial with **N-A-D- Ī**, this witnesses confirmed bias-free from researcher during take a sample toward interview process.

Finally, the model can help believer for better understand the right view of holy water and for those disbelievers or non-Buddhist background can easily comprehend the hidden doctrine and the right intention of sprinkle the holy water and chanting *paritta*.

**N-A-D-Ī MODEL** can possibly indicate about holy water that monks act as a Noble man who maintains Buddhist Norm via chanting *paritta* to make holy water and water itself in so undeniable that it was so Necessary (Necessity). This is the meaning of “N” (Nobleman-Norm-Necessary)

“**A**” is to be able to understand the right **A**ttitude of holy water and be **A**ware of misuse; these actions would share **A**ppreciation level toward devotees. (Attitude-Awareness-Appreciation)

“**D**” is **D**eliberation (*Jetana*) which convey good action of holy water’s perspective, once use of holy drop must **D**evelop mind together with wisdom, As long studies, holy water is a **D**efense from being reckless. (Deliberation-Develop-Defense)

“**I**” is when the monks **I**nvolved with people to share goodwill each other, Holy water is an **I**nurance of successful and **I**mpression when touching the drop of peace. (Involve-Insurance-Impression)

*Ratana Sutta*, Holy water and Chanting are share the same value, these are *dhamma* base to make people feel confident and be the first checkpoint of faith. The process of holy water makes people calm from chaotic mind and step forward to see things clearer which is meditation stage. Holy water must link with holy doctrine, which is the symbol of the Buddha, once people chant the whole *paritta* is the time when they bow the head to accept the triple gems as a refuge of life.

## 5.2 Suggestions

This Thesis has been committed with its title “The Beliefs and Practices of Making Holy Water in *Theravāda* Buddhism” A study focus on ritual, belief, practice, perception and attitude of people toward Holy water, researcher suggests for further study about;

- (1.) The Comparative study of Holy water in Buddhism and Hinduism.
- (2.) The study of *Navaggahāyusadhamma*: A chanting of traditional nine deities *Paritta* for life celebration in Thailand.

Actually, *Navaggahāyusadhamma*, which is very well known activity hold during big celebration such as the new year crossover night chanting around Thailand, new researcher should study about chanting pattern, core value and development of chanting.

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(accessed to on 26 December 2017)