

## WAYS OF BUDDHADHAMMA PROPAGATION: THE BUDDHA'S PERIOD TO TODAY

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### ABSTRACT

This article is to discuss the development of ways in Buddhadhamma propagation from the Buddha's period to the present time. Its main data source is gathered from Tipitaka, and Mahayāna texts, beside that the research is also added more collecting data from secondary sources such as books, writings, lectures, journals, theses, and online. Based on the concerned resources found, we will conduct an analysis in the results among studies and systematizing them in order to understand the development of the ways in propagation in the past and trends in the future. The final step of article will draw conclusions and the results for further research. Thus, the timeframe of this research can be divided into two periods: 1) during the Buddha's period, 2) after the Buddha's period to present time. The findings of this research show the results of the study can be inferred that development of ways in the propagation from the Buddha's period to present time that have the active roles as essential factors in each period.

## 1. Introduction

The development of *Buddhadhamma* propagation from the *Buddha's* period to the present time, this is the historical process using various ways in communication, in which the ways of each period is almost have manifested diversity through five main factors: (1) the *Buddha* as a founder, (2) the *Buddhadhamma* as the teachings, (3) the disciple (*Saṅgha*) as *Buddhadhamma* propagator, (4) male and female devotees (*upāsaka* and *upāsikā*) as supporter and (5) the equipment and media. During the *Buddha's* period, the ways in propagation has proven their importance through those full five main factors. It is also the main foundation for the development of the ways in the next period. And after the *Buddha's* period to present time, there are various ways used to propagation, which has always been improved in each period that is a necessary feature for all periods. If we survey the development of propagation through the five main factors throughout the two periods, we will understand a lot of meanings in the similarities and differences of the ways in propagation between them; it's therefore nothing less important if there is another systematically research on the effective ways of propagating from the *Buddha's* period to the present time. From there update more effective methods in most fields depending on each social context for missionary.

## 2. The ways of *Buddhadhamma* propagation during the *Buddha's* period

After the *Buddha's* enlightenment, with the ideal of “the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the word, for the good, for the gain, and for the welfare of gods and men”.<sup>1</sup> The *Buddha* and *Saṅgha* propagated the *Buddhadhamma* as widely as possible and actively action with many various ways in their mission.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1 Early *Dhamma* Propagation of the *Buddha*

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<sup>1</sup> Vin I 11.

<sup>2</sup> Phangcham, *Buddhism for Young Students*, (The University of Virginia: Pim-Pun Printing Limited, 1993), 17.

The *Buddha* is the first important factor as is known “the founder of Buddhism”.<sup>3</sup> It is an important event in the Buddhist history, the first discourse of *Buddha* which marked the motion of the *Dhamma*-wheel, became who found the Buddhism.<sup>4</sup>

For the *Buddha*'s mission works, who founded the *Saṅgha* on democratic principles and sent 45 years propagating the *Dhamma*: 1) the *Buddha* is considered to be the first and most exemplary propagator. Preaching sermons regardless of social class, rich or poverty, ideology, occupation, gender, age etc... 2) For his disciple to study and practice the *Dhamma* what he had attained. 3) Founded the Three Jewels – Fourfold Disciple. 4) Encouraged his disciples propagate the *Dhamma* to everywhere for every classes. 5) Instructed his disciples how to preserve and develop the *Buddhadhamma*.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Dhamma*, it is mainly about compassion and wisdom and how to practice rather than debate, is avoids both self-mortification and hedonism, some is called the Middle Way (*Majhima Paṭipadā*). The *Buddha* described the *Dhamma* as: “seen here and now, timeless, inviting investigation, leading onwards, to be understood by the wise, each for him”.<sup>6</sup> So in any aspects of the *Buddhadhamma* is not out of that meaning; compassion and wisdom of *Dhamma*, Mind (*citta, mano or viññā*), and *Tisikkhā* which it can be said that they are necessary aspects to motivate on the path of practice and propagation.

Similarly, the ideal of the preaching the *Dhamma* is clearly identified by the *Buddha* that “*Sabbha Danam dhamma Danam jinati* - preaching the *Dhamma* is the highest charity”, (*dhamma desana kusala*) - good deed of preaching the *Dhamma*, the

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<sup>3</sup> Piyadassi, *The Buddha His Life and Teaching*, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1982), 7.

<sup>4</sup> S V 420–424.

<sup>5</sup> Bapat, *2500 Year of Buddhism*, (New Delhi: Publications Division Delhi-8, 1956), 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> M I 37.

preacher must not expect gifts, offertories, fame or false pride.<sup>7</sup> Motivation on the benefit for all sentient beings, is also wishes of the *Buddha* with the methods following: 1) Four analytical skills (*paṭisambhidā*): meaning, purpose, thought and causes, language and of ready-wit. 2) The *Vibhaṅga* and *Ānanda Sutta* also mention six principles in which the *Buddha* transmitted the *Dhamma*: “discourses, defines, establishes, reveals, analyses, and clarifies”, (*deseti paññāpeti paññhapeti vivarati vibhajati uttānikaroti*).<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2 The *Buddhadhamma* as the Teachings

The *Buddhadhamma* is factor as is known as the teachings, which is the way or the quality of the *Buddha* including: 1) The Four Noble Truths: arising, reason, cessation and the path leading to. 2) Own efforts toward purification and insight. 3) Practical system of compassion and leading to perfect wisdom of universalistic system.<sup>9</sup> The *Buddhadhamma* is thus as the teachings because it is very clear when he is convinced that the *Dhamma* is the guideline, a place for all the mottos and actions of the *Sangha*. “*Ananda, Dhamma and Vinaya, I taught and expounded to you are to be your teacher*”.<sup>10</sup> So, this is also the basis to distinguish what is the true teaching of the *Buddha* needs to refer to two factors, namely the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*.

The main teachings were formed during his 45 years of propagating, and preserved fully in *Tipitaka*. It may be divided into two groups: philosophical (*Sutta Piṭaka*) and moral (*Vinaya Piṭaka*). The fundamental principle of the *Buddha*’s philosophy is the theory of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).<sup>11</sup> In addition,

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<sup>7</sup> Janakabhivamsa, *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*, (Yangon: International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, 1999), 48.

<sup>8</sup> Buddhadatta, *Sammohavinodanī (Vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā)*, (Oxford: PTS, 1980), 259.

<sup>9</sup> Singhathon Narasabho, *Buddhism: A Guide to a Happy Life*, (Germany: Buddhist University, 1971), 3.

<sup>10</sup> D I 154.

<sup>11</sup> Bapat, *2500 Year of Buddhism*, 29.

the *Buddhadhamma* is known as including the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* refer to the eight criteria that the *Buddha* had mentioned in the *saṅkhitta Sutta*.<sup>12</sup>

In short, preaching to the *Dhamma* of the *Buddha* that all these indicate the practicality and universality of the *Buddha's* teachings. Emphasize on personal perfection and liberation; thereby giving the methods appropriate to the level, suitable for each person's opportunity.

### 2.3 The Disciple (*Saṅgha*) as the *Buddhadhamma* Propagators

If the *Buddha* is a physician; *Dhamma* is a remedy; *Saṅgha* is the person who cares for and gives medicine to the patient. The *Saṅgha* means "association", or "community". The Buddhist *Saṅgha* is sometimes mentioned four kinds: monk (*Bhikkhu*), nun (*Bhikkhunī*), male devotee (*Upāsaka*) and female devotee (*Upāsikā*). Besides that, two kinds of *Saṅgha* should be distinguished, namely: 1) The *Savaka Saṅgha*, or the community of noble disciples, 2) The *Bhikkhu Saṅgha*, or the community of monks.<sup>13</sup>

After the preaching of the *Buddha* in *Benares*, the result was the number of *Bhikkhus*, who attained holy fruit increased to Sixty *Arahants*. Four brothers and fifty friends of *Yasa* asked for ordination. The converting of the first Sixty *Arahants* was very quick. Thus, this is the secret of success of the missionary activity. This vent naturally inspired the Buddhist missionaries to create new areas of activity for each group later.<sup>14</sup>

The *Saṅgha's* quality is the most important foundation determining the success of mission in the early period. There are two factors that make up the qualities of the Buddhist *Saṅgha* are clearly defined to distinguish them from other religious organizations. First, the *Saṅgha* is a harmonious spiritual organization (*smagra-saṅgha*); the second quality of the *Saṅgha* is purity. The goal of monks is to enter the Buddhist monastic system, to renounce the secular life with the aim of helping each other, supporting each other on the path become an Enlightened One; at

<sup>12</sup> A VIII 53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>14</sup> Bapat, 2500 Year of Buddhism, 4.

the same time, sharing and dedicating the intellectual and spiritual experiences gained for the happiness of others. Therefore, members of the *Saṅgha* have the ability to live in harmony and purity. Only the flourishing of *Saṅgha*, Buddhism can develop in the historical direction. The existence of *Saṅgha* is the existence of the *Buddhadhamma*.

## 2.4 The Kinds of Supporters

The lay supporters are also seen the key factor refer to ways of the propagation in the *Buddha's* period as: *Anāthapiṇḍika*, *Visākhā*, and *Jīvaka*.<sup>15</sup>

During the *Buddha's* life, there are three great Kings as *Bimbisara* of *Magadha*, *Pasenadi* of *Kosala* and his son heir *Ajātasattu*.<sup>16</sup> The three great Kings- *Bimbisara*, *Pasenadi* -*Kosala*, and *Ajātasattu* - devoted a lot to the spreading of the *Buddhadhamma* both before and after his passed away, as well as supporting the *Ararhat* monks to spread the *Buddhadhamma* out of India.

According to two *suttas* belong to *Aṅguttaranikāya*, during *Buddha's* lifetime, there were sixteen countries: *Āṅgā*, *Magadhā*, *Kāsī*, *Kosalā*, *Vajjī*, *Mallā*, *Cetī*, *Vamsā*, (*Vaṅgā*), *Kurū*, *Pañcālā*, *Macchā*, *Sūrasenā*, *Assakā*, *Avantī*, *Gandhārā*, and *Kambojā*.<sup>17</sup> These countries in a few other *suttas*, only 10 countries: *Kāsī*, *Kosalā*, *Vajjī*, *Mallā*, *Cetī*, *Vamsā*, *Kurū*, *Pañcālā*, *Macchā* (*Majjhā*), *Sūrasenā*<sup>18</sup> which supported the *Saṅgha* in propagation.

## 2.5 The Equipment and Media in *Buddhadhamma* Propagation

The equipment and media in propagation is the last factor to be considered referring ways of the propagation in the *Buddha's* period. The modern scholars and thinkers as Walter Ong suggested that beginning in oral tradition, was conveyed in a visual form through scripture writing as well as printing and engraving on leaves, wood and stone, and then which they are now taking shape in the world in a new

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<sup>15</sup> Bapat, 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> Vin I 35.

<sup>17</sup> A. III. 70.

<sup>18</sup> A VIII. 42

means through electronic media.<sup>19</sup> Along with other equipment of everyday items such as alms, dress, images, monasteries, media and “structure experiences of the transcendental etc.” also used as the equipment and media of spreading the *Buddhadhamma*.<sup>20</sup>

In the training of a monk, the equipment used as a method of equipping elder monks instructs to a novice or new monk such as: 1) the instructor-centered method, 2) learner-centered of method, 3) content-focused method and 4) interactive method.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the *Buddha* used many different methods as equipment to converted sentient beings; the equipment is sometimes teachings of moral standards, gradual teachings (*anupubbikathā*), exhortation, showing specific principle of practice, by similes, by metaphorical stories, as a manifestation of miracles (*pāṭihāriya*), by the silence, by dialogues, by the gradual method (*anupubbikathā*), and sometimes by debate ... etc.

In general, the *Buddha* propagated the *Dhamma* to people with equipment in three ways: 1) by performing miracles, 2) by reading the mind, and 3) by preaching a discourse that was appropriate to each one's level by language of oral. Not only does not it contradict the use of different methods, the *Buddha* shows us that teaching the truth and morality with a variety of methods that are appropriate for the listener will help them achieve enlightenment, useful supporting in propagation.

### **3. The ways of *Buddhadhamma* propagation after the *Buddha*'s period to present time**

The ways of propagation after the *Buddha*'s period to present time through following factors: 1) the *Dhamma* as propagation, 2) the *Buddhadhamma* propagation of disciple, 3) the supporter, 4) the equipment and digital media.

#### **3.1 The *Dhamma* as Propagation**

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<sup>19</sup> Gregory Grieve, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 104.

<sup>20</sup> Meyer Birgit, *Religious Sensations: Why Media, Aesthetics, and Power Matter in the Study of Contemporary Religion*, (Amsterdam: Vrje University, 2006), 20.

<sup>21</sup> Billy Armstrong, *Educational Development and Technology*, (United Kingdom: ED-Tech Press, 2018), 120.

After the *Buddha* entered *Nibbāna*, the *Dhamma* as propagation has to base on these criteria following as: 1) the methods leading to wisdom, 2) as the system including to all conditions of practice that can lead beings to enlightenment, 3) this system is the basis for later spread *Dhamma* of Buddhist schools.

The *Dhamma* in the Northern and Southern Schools marked the new period of propagation, by the four main councils of *Tipitaka* and eighteen Schools, for the purpose of preserving and spreading the *Dhamma* for future generations<sup>22</sup> (Snelling John, 2011: 79), the main features includes:

1. The affirmation of the teachings of the *Buddha* through oral equipment; to have for basis to writing.
2. The holding of councils to deal the problems in the *Saṅgha* and the *Buddhadhamma*.
3. The separation of the *Saṅgha* into various Schools, a total of 18.
4. The appearance of *Abhidhamma* as commentarial tradition.
5. The spread of the *Buddhadhamma* under the patronage of the King *Ashoka*.

When was considered Northern Buddhism, which was spread from northern India to Central Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan by mainly *Mahāsaṃghika* school, based on the *Sanskrit* scriptures. The majority is known as *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. From the 4th Buddhist council at *Kāśmīra*, the purpose was to compose commentaries on the *Pitakas*: the commentary on the *Sutta-pitaka*, the *Vinayavibhāṣa*, and the *Abhidharmavibhāṣa*. The concept of the *Bodhisattva* (Great Vehicle) first appeared in this period, as the characteristic in the *Dhamma* of the later *Mahāyāna*. The concept of the *Buddha* was more openly understood which not limit in the historical one, of whom *Shakyamuni*.<sup>23</sup> The *Prajñāparamita* *sūtra* was considered the first principal

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<sup>22</sup> John Snelling, *The Buddhist Handbook: A Complete Guide to Buddhist Teaching and Practice*, (London: Random House, 2011), 79.

<sup>23</sup> Arp Robert and Arthur Caplan, *1001 Ideas: That Changed The Way We Think*, (New York: Atria Books, 2013), 239.



scriptures of *Mahayana*. Also having *Madhyamaka* (Middle Way) and the teachings focused on experience as the ultimate principle of *Yogachara* School.<sup>24</sup>

With Southern Buddhism that was spread from South India to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asian countries, such as Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia by mainly *Sthaviravada* School, using *Pāli* scriptures was called Southern Buddhism, is also called *Theravāda* Buddhism today.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 The *Buddhadhamma* Propagation of Disciple (*Saṅgha*)

The *Saṅgha* has become the community representing the *Buddha* to directly spread the *Dhamma* to all sentient beings after his *Parinibbāna*. The propagation of the *Saṅgha* through the following three fields: 1) the *Saṅgha* has took place three Councils, in order to identify and complete all the *Buddha's* teachings in *Tipitaka* as well as to avoid misunderstanding and to make a guideline for practice, 2) the *Saṅgha* maintains the propagation through such activities as purifying the *Saṅgha* base on the *Vinaya*, 3) the *Saṅgha* spread *Buddhadhamma* by missionary monks and the sectarian divisions leading to develop the skillful means to each different subject and situation. There were therefore many different *Vinaya*, *Dhamma* and *Abhidhamma* chiefs that had competed with each other. Morrison Elizabeth suggested that in the early Buddhism, the *Saṅgha* could use the leaders for faithful transmission of the *Buddhadhamma* and authority what roles of leadership.

For the line of *Vinaya* chiefs (*Vinayapātimokkha*), the first *Vinaya* Chief of the lists of six *Vinayapātimokkha* mentioned *Upāli* who recited all the *Vinaya* at the first Council, and established to the conduct of monastic life.<sup>26</sup> *Upāli* then transmitted

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<sup>24</sup> Veki-Matti Karkkainen, *Trinity and Revelation*, (Cambridge: William B, Publishing Company, 2014), 150.

<sup>25</sup> Benjamin J. Hubbard, James A. Santucci, and John T. Hatfield, *An Educator's Classroom Guide to America's Religious Beliefs and Practices*, (Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 10.

<sup>26</sup> Morrison Elizabeth, *The power of Patriarchs: Qisong and Lineage in Chinese Buddhism*, (Boston: Leiden, 2010), 216.

his authority and position to *Dāsaka*; *Dāsaka* passed it on to *Soṇaka*; continued to *Siggava* and he transmitted his responsibility to *Moggaliputta Tissa*.<sup>27</sup>

The line of masters of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammācārya*) wasn't like the lines of *Vinayapātimokkha* and *Abhidhammācariya*; it received a direct lineage from the *Buddha*. The line of five master of *Dhamma* discovered in *Sanskrit* texts from the second century C.E, in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* mentioned *Mahākāśyapa* who leader of the first council, was seen as the authorial monk need to confirm and uphold the *Buddha's* teachings and held the council. With such as responsibility, *Mahākāśyapa* was considered the first authorial tradition of five master of the *Dhamma*.<sup>28</sup> The list of the line of Masters in the *Dhamma* (*Dhammācārya*): *Mahākāśyapa*, *Ananda*, *Madhyāntika*, *Sāṇakavāsin* and *Upagupta*.<sup>29</sup>

According to *Buddhaghosa*, the line of *Abhidhamma* Master (*Abhidhammācariya*) which the line began with *Sāriputta* that first of the list of twenty *Abhidhammācariya* continued until to the period of *Asoka*. Like the *Vinaya* chiefs, the *Abhidhamma* masters were represented as a leader of tradition.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the purpose of developing the list of the chief line was to define the virtues of monks as reliability and adherence of each tradition; keeps biography necessary to assure the existence and the noble example of monks.<sup>31</sup> They are also one of the important aspects in the development of ways in propagation to play different roles at each period.

### 3.3 The Supporter

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<sup>27</sup> John. S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia*, (United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 2017), 60.

<sup>28</sup> Morrison Elizabeth, *The power of Patriarchs: Qisong and Lineage in Chinese Buddhism*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> John. S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia*, 60.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>31</sup> Morrison Elizabeth, *The power of Patriarchs: Qisong and Lineage in Chinese Buddhism*, 19.

After the *Buddha's* period to present time, the supporter has contributed to the *Saṅgha* in almost fields to propagation, including to the commentators, Scholars and scientists.

Some represent commentators and Scholars in the early 1<sup>st</sup> until the end 5<sup>th</sup> C.E century after the King *Asoka* in India, there appeared many great commentators in *Pāli* tradition. Among the most well-known Buddhist commentators are *Nagasena*, *Buddhadatta*, *Buddhaghosa* and *Dhammapāla*.<sup>32</sup>

In *Sanskrit* tradition also appeared many famous commentators and authors such as: *Aśvaghoṣa*, *Nāgārjuna*, *Chandrakīrti*, *Buddhapālita*, *Bhāṣavyaveka*, *Asaṅga* and *Vasuhandhu*, *Dinnnāga*, and *Dharmakīrti*.<sup>33</sup>

Some salient scientists in Europe, Asia and America through eight volumes of *Bibliographie Bouddhique* or *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, done by Winternitz identify scientists in the field of Buddhist studies. With contributions of E. Burnouf, Fausböll, Prinsep, Kern, Csoma de Kőrös, Oldenberg, Poussin, Lévi, Stcherbatsky and Mr. and Mrs. Rhys Davids, SC Das, S. C. Vidyabhusan, Bunyiu Nanjio, J. Takakusu, D. Kosambi and B.M Barua.<sup>34</sup>

Besides that, after the *Buddha's Nibbāna*, outstanding among the lay supporters was the kings of various empires, who supported to hold all Buddhist Councils and patronized the *Saṅgha* in India, Ceylon, Myanmar and Thailand. It is mentioned in scriptures such as *Dīpavamsa*, *Mahāvamsa*, *Cullavagga*, *Saṅgītiyaṃsa*.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, up to this period, the mission of propagating is not only undertaken by the *Saṅgha* but also directly participate by laypeople from all classes in society. This is the main reason why *Buddhadhamma* is known and widely applied in many

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<sup>32</sup> Puoting Barabudur, *The Legend of King Asoka*, (Hanoi: Imprimerie Extreme Orient, 1935), 82.

<sup>33</sup> Bapat, 2500 Year of Buddhism, 129.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 381 -397.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 16.

different fields. Since then anyone can easily access and understand the *Buddha's* teachings with their expertise and abilities.

### 3.4 The Equipment and Digital Media

The equipment and digital media are increasingly considered as the factor in propagation in the modern era. In addition to the use of the oral tradition, the *Saṅgha* also applied more equipment of the Palm Leaves to persevere and propagate the *Buddhadhamma*. These are considered the basic ways to propagation in the early period of *Saṅgha*. The writing had India in the mid-third century B.C.; Most of the early written evidence in India after *Ashoka's* period was from Buddhism, such as the inscriptions on stupas and other important Buddhist sites. About 29 B.C. in Sri Lanka, the Malaya country (*Matale*), and around the 100 A.D. there was also other the Council that considered being the Fourth Council by *Mahāyana* School. All these Councils both used writing to preserve the *Tipiṭaka*.<sup>36</sup> After these Councils, all the *Buddhadhamma*, along with the commentaries (*Atthakathas*) were inscribed in writing on the Palm leaves. This is the method and the process by which *Tipiṭaka* had been preserved. Starting from here, the text has become one of the official equipment propagating the *Buddhadhamma* in the next periods.<sup>37</sup> Following the most important developments in human communication was the written texts of the Chinese Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty.

Besides that, Hansen suggested that the Silk Road is the Internet where monks and laypeople propagated the *Buddhadhamma* from India through Central Asia into China. In particular, the local languages and cultures of different regions was equipment, used by monks to communicate the *Buddhadhamma* to the people.<sup>38</sup>

When radio equipment first appeared in Asia, it was also used by Buddhist monks to propagate the *Buddhadhamma* to the Buddhist community. The tapes were also used to give people in remote villages approach to the *Buddhadhamma* at that

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<sup>36</sup> Salomon Richard, "On the Origin of the Early Indian Scripts: A Review Article," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995): 271-279.

<sup>37</sup> Chan Khoon, *Buddhism Course*, (Malaysia: Leboh Bagor, 2012), 294.

<sup>38</sup> Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37.

time. As moving into the digital media period, the computer has become a particularly useful means of propagating the *Buddhadhamma*. In the late 1990s, the *Vipassana* Research Institute (VRI), originated by S.N Goenka, by a CD-Rom having the total *Pāli Tipiṭaka* formed on the Burmese *Tipiṭaka* at the Sixth Council with ([www.tipitaka.org](http://www.tipitaka.org)) link.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the digital edition of *Tipiṭaka*, Buddhists and scholars were among the first to set up Internet-based discussion forums, the oldest being Buddha-L in 1991. The [www.Virtual Library of Buddhist Studies](http://www.VirtualLibraryofBuddhistStudies.org) was another form of resource in 1992 that contained things like bibliographies, biographies, directories, Buddhist electronic texts, poetry and sermons.<sup>40</sup>

#### **4 The development of ways in *Buddhadhamma* propagation from the *Buddha's* period to present time**

##### **4.1 The similar characteristics**

The common characteristics of the development of ways in the two periods for the sole purpose are to benefit for sentient beings. With that ideal, it is considered an artwork derived from the compassion and the wisdom. In order to adapt with these new and problematical context in contemporary society, many various ways has applied, which have called these skillful means (*upāya kosalla*) (D. III. 220) through four factors.

One thing in common which the quality and purpose is stills the same. The *Buddhadhamma* is flexible depending on the circumstances. These skillful methods helped the *Buddhadhamma* had a great deal of flexibility in adopt at any time to suit the level of sentience beings. It is based on the qualities of *Dhamma* in practical life were simply defined as have four qualities as: 1) being good at speaking and suitable for literary style, 2) pleasing to people and suitable at all levels, 3) in its results and benefit, and 4). Therefore, the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* are truths and clear messages for

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<sup>39</sup> Gregory P. Grieve and Daniel Veidlinger, *Buddhism the Internet and Digital Media: The Pixel in the Lotus*, (New York: Routledge, 1007), 8.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 8.

us to understand and practice on the right path, which like would be a teacher after the *Buddha* passed away.

The effect of propagation is dependent on the ability and qualities of the propagators at whether or not knowing the right ways in the *dhamma* for even the same purpose of delivering the teachings to others. This is why the role and qualities of the *Saṅgha* are always appreciated in all periods. The qualities of the *Saṅgha* must always have harmony and purity.

In addition to the responsibility to fulfill their duties to the family and contribute to the benefits of society, in any period the lay Buddhist also have two main roles, which are considered 1) the role of *Dhamma* protection (*Dhammarakkhita*) and 2) the role of *Dhamma* inheritance (*Dhammadāyadaka*), including practice the *Buddhadhamma* and support the *Saṅgha* in preserving and propagating the *Buddhadhamma*. From these two points, the role of Buddhists is also flexibly shown according to specific circumstances to achieve the highest efficiency.

About the media in propagation, throughout the Buddhist history, there is a common, such as it is understood that is the tools to transmit information through seeing, hearing and practicing. The media is usually in charge of spreading three main parts: content, form, and subject. 1). Content includes presentations of experiences, tips or questions; 2). Forms are these actions manifested through various forms, speech, articles or television news; 3). Subjects can be other individuals or organizations. As, a skillful “vehicle” leading to the goal of enlightenment, the *Buddhadhamma* is flexible depending on the circumstances. These skillful methods helped the *Buddhadhamma* had a great deal of flexibility in adopt at any time to suit the level of sentience beings. In terms of the quality and effectiveness of social media, which is the rapid spread of images and sounds, or in other words making the world a “flat world”, the *Buddha* is the master in this field. Through that, we understand that the *Buddha* was more than 25 centuries away from us but fully understood the effectual power of image and sound. Traveling monks means making the Buddhist *Saṅgha* image spread among the masses. When give the *Dhamma* that is the power of sound is disseminated.

## 4.2 The Different Characteristics

In the mission of propagation, the clear difference after the *Buddha's* time is that the image and statue the *Buddha's* are considered to represent and symbolize his qualities. That is the obvious difference in how to use clever means to propagate the *Buddhadhamma*. Its result that the *Buddha's* image today is very rich and diverse with many typical shapes, bearing the cultural and artistic nuances of each country compared to its early period. Along with that meaning, the *Buddha's* images also have much significance and play different roles in each period of propagation. Worshiping the *Buddha's* image at least has three factors: 1) the need to get merit by contemplating the *Buddha* (*Buddhadarśana*), 2) the wish of disciples to contemplating the *Buddha*,<sup>41</sup> 3) to make Buddhism ubiquitous. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the image of the *Buddha*, although not directly preaching and missionary, but in each period it plays very an important role, is the first sacred symbol to awaken the mind of beings in the mission of propagating.

If the *Buddha's* teachings are the specific foundation for the system of practice and the path to liberation includes 1) the Four Noble Truths, 2) Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) and after the *Buddha's* time it is concretely explained in the part like philosophy of various Buddhist tradition, *Atthakatha*-commentary and sud-commentary contain in *Tripitaka* which be applied in almost all field of life and we can be reserved and easily accessible on Buddhist websites.

In the process of forming and developing the *Saṅgha*, the role of the *Saṅgha* is affirmed in quality of the community of harmonious – purity and exemplary of model for common people to follow and its sacred mission. The role of monks and nuns in the new era will be expressed through two aspects; 1) the moral and 2) social aspect. Moral and intellectual aspects belong to self-interest (*Atmahitam*), refers to the need to practice and develop personal morals for the monk. The social aspect is the spirit of giving goodness to others (*Parahita*), is concerned with the role of the monks in participating in society by skillful means:

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<sup>41</sup> Krishan, *The Buddha Image Its Origin and Development*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Monoharlal, 1996), 20.

Firstly, in this spirit of equality, this quality is still a valuable lesson for people to ponder and learn in order to resolve the conflicts caused by racism, caste discrimination and religion. Secondly, the Buddhist *Saṅgha* is the first organization that laid the foundations for the philosophy of gender equality in ancient society. In this social context, people realize the boundless value of gender equality, and the equal value of gender in the monastic life that *Saṅgha* has applied for more than 2500 years in India. Finally, as it's known, the quality of the *Saṅgha* is based on nonviolence, that is, the ability to deal with crises in order to live in harmony with each other. The *Saṅgha* always encourages people to find the ways to solve all social problems through understanding, tolerance and compassion.

According to the Buddhist tradition, the supporter is the Lay Buddhist, who has the important roles in supporting of the *Saṅgha's* life, by the Eight Requisites (*aṭṭha parikkhāra*), practice the *Buddhadhamma* and support the *Saṅgha* in preserving and propagating the *Buddhadhamma*. However, the roles of laypeople in those each period are more different; it can be expressed in four aspects such as: 1) learning the *Dhamma*, 2) practicing the *Dhamma* 3) preserving the *Dhamma*, and 4) propagating the *Dhamma*. If at the time of the *Buddha*, the laypeople only indirectly supported the *Saṅgha*, after the *Buddha's* time onwards the Buddhists turned from the supporter to the direct participant in propagation; they could be commentators, scholars and scientists with the contributions of important works and using many modern tools to preserve and propagate the *Buddhadhamma* widely and quickly.

For the use of the equipment and media in propagation, it is clear that their role depends on the user and the specific circumstances, the result of which is highly effective. They were used by the *Saṅgha* to propagate the *Buddhadhamma* more effectively in each specific situation as the equipment: 1) palm leaves, 2) written in text, the digital media: the Radio, Internet, digital edition, electronic texts, Social media... etc.

The roles of media in propagation are usually in charge of spreading three main parts: content, form, and subject. 1). Content includes presentations of experiences, tips or questions; 2). Forms are these actions manifested through various forms, speech, articles or television news; 3). Subjects can be other individuals or



organizations. Therefore, in my opinion, the main role of the media in propagation of the *Buddhadhamma* in the present age is to communicate information with its speed and accuracy. This is also a very effective support for propagating the *Buddhadhamma*.

### 5. The tendency of the ways of the *Buddhadhamma* propagation for future

In order to understand the development of the ways of *Dhamma* propagation systematically, used by the factors, we need to explain the similarities and differences between them, by relying on social and cultural contexts; geographical features; customs of each territory in each period etc. From there we can also guess the tendency of the ways of the propagation for future.

Explaining the diversity of the Buddhist school was also one of the ways of propagation, as it adapted to each social context, such as both the *Pāli* and the *Sanskrit* traditions eventually developed list of masters so that the *Buddhadhamma* was transmitted from generation to generation. *Theravāda* School focused on the lineage of Chiefs of the *Vinaya*. It is through these lines of transmission that Sri Lankan tradition claimed a direct lineage from the *Buddha* with *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the quality of *Saṅgha* is considered as role of one of important factor in propagation – its harmony, purity, and role of *Saṅgha* that has made the difference to other religious organizations through both ethical and social aspects. Based on these, each monk has the ability to practice skillfully in practicing and spreading the *Buddhadhamma* to the masses, and can flexibly and creatively apply the *Buddhadhamma* to participate in society. Not only in religious roles consistent with today's social view, but also contribute to the moral development and human education in any social context.

The supporters contribute in propagation through scientific works in different fields of Buddhism as the commentaries refer to the different philosophes views of the Buddhist schools or teachers in the *Tipiṭaka* in order to suit people's

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<sup>42</sup> John. S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia*, 60.

ability to understand *Buddhadhamma* in each period. The global intellectual contributions of scientists around the world have greatly contributed to helping the world community realize of the path of wisdom as well as the cultural, ethical and spiritual values of Buddhism. In addition to, in the process of developing the ways of the propagation, the support of Buddhist Kings of different periods in systematization and completing the *Buddhadhamma* played the extremely important role, with the systematization that help learner avoid confusion more easily. Therefore, the supporters were also considered as one of important factors in the propagation. These contributions have helped Buddhism spread to over the world, subjugating the lack of goodwill arguments. They have changed the perception of the political, philosophical and religious view of leaders in the world until present time. With the efforts, Buddhism in the context of globalization is considered the fastest developing and most powerful peace religion.

However, all the ways used to propagate the *Buddhadhamma* have two sides, apart from the positive one over time they will gradually generate its negative side.

Firstly, worship the *Buddha's* image with many different purposes; as for family peace and prosperity or according to the family tradition. The *Buddha's* image has been gradually becoming the powerful gods to bless or punish anyone. The use of *Buddha's* images for decorative purposes in various forms is becoming more popular like products that are sold on many others e-commerce sites.

Secondly, about the *Buddhadhamma*: Abuse of the words 'Skillful Means' (*Upāyakusala*) to organize rituals that are not in accordance with the *Buddha's* teaching. Abuse the temple's land to organize or coordinate with the laypeople to provide economic services. Funeral services for the dead have become a major economic service in most temples today. Temples often organize music festivals; hire singers to sing, trade, lottery to raise funds, obviously all these activities are contrary to *Buddha's* teachings.

Thirdly, the symbol of monks is abused by many organizations, companies and individuals in promotional services for business products. The problem of illegal almsgiving of beggars disguised as monks, tarnish the pure image of the *Saṅgha*.

Some young monks living a negligent life, losing control when joining Facebook, Twitter Medias and other social networking sites, have posted pictures that are not in accordance with the precepts of the monks. The matter of adopting fathers, mothers foster of some monks and nuns.

Finally, in another respect of the equipment and digital media, it is easy to cause misunderstandings about the content, and be used by bad guys to lower the honor of the Saṅgha. It is not possible to cultivate respect and wholeheartedly support of lay Buddhist towards the *Saṅgha*. With the unfortunate events that have caused the *Buddhadhamma* to be misunderstood, somewhat distorted, causing distrust among lay people and creating bad comments in society.

However, positive tendency as the way to face and resolve the problems: the abuse of the *Buddha's* image for personal gain frequently occurs in this digital era, Buddhists can also adopt digital means to prevent or limit such problems. For problems related to the *Buddhadhamma*, based on the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*, which is reserved and easily accessible on Buddhist websites. *Tipiṭaka* is the standard, a measure of right and wrong when a monk preaches. All activities of the Saṅgha should be closely linked with the legal system of that country to solve the problem of fake monk. Lay people are also one of the most essential factors in the mission of directly supporting and propagating the *Buddhadhamma* by digital media. Chanting is not for the purpose of Buddhists to instill the *Buddhadhamma*; Preaching the *Dhamma* is to expose the profound meaning of the *Buddha's* teachings in the *Tipiṭaka*; through forms such as writing books, publishing scriptures, distributing and sharing lectures on social networks; Performing rituals in the lives of the lay people such as funerals, weddings, and death anniversaries should have the attendance of monks to chant and pray; Opening retreats at temples, guiding Buddhists to practice. All activities to *Buddhadhamma* propagation in the future tendency must be related to the media. With the development of science and technology, Buddhist scriptures are no longer in the framework of monasteries. Electronic versions of the *Tipiṭaka* are also being completed in various languages. This is a very useful factor for the study of the *Tipiṭaka*, the barriers to primary resources are no longer available, and everyone has the opportunity to easily access its content. With the convenience of digital media, it

is easier for us to gather the resources for study and research, as well as to disseminate the spiritual values of *Buddhadhamma*. The *Buddhadhamma* factor is the content of the media, and uses the media to bring the contents of the propagation to the Buddhist community or the whole world, is the mission of the propagator.

## 6. Conclusion

In short, the development of ways in propagation from the *Buddha's* period to present time is varied and very useful. Through, the ways are based main factors including (1) the *Buddha* as a founder, (2) the *Buddhadhamma* as the teachings, (3) the disciple (*Saṅgha*) as propagator, (4) male and female devotees as supporter and (5) The Equipment and media to propagate *Buddhadhamma* are especially expressed for the specific purposes. The only purpose of propagating is for happiness and liberation – attain Enlightenment for gods and humans.

Anyway, the tendency of ways of the propagation for future only revolves around social, human, and media aspects with its two positive and negative tendencies, still base on these main five factors, which in the ways of propagation through prominent works of represent characters and important events always play a role in marking the development of Buddhism.

In which, they perform their roles effectively, or as a form of skillful means, as the appropriate expression for each period, or as suitable media. Thus, depending on the development tendencies of the social mobilization structure, the mission of propagating the *Buddhadhamma* must always be applied with suitable ways to complete the whole noble mission effectively. After each such adaptation, the *Buddhadhamma* becomes new again and immediately regains the right form and vigor with its quality and liberating flavor.

In parallel with the ever-changing social context, the role of the lay Buddhist as a supporter in their duties have also adapted to present time to build a strong Buddhist association that contributes to the *Buddhadhamma* propagation. Furthermore, in addition to the three duties of learning the *Dhamma*, practicing the *Dhamma*, maintaining the *Dhamma*, there is also another very important role, which

is to propagating *Buddhadhamma* through applying modern technology that the *Sangha* still lacking.

At the same time, the media has also played the important in propagation in the present age, through its speed and accuracy to spread three main parts: content, form, and subject. The mission of bringing the *Buddhadhamma* to all over the world through the “flat world” foundation of the internet becomes much simpler, quicker, effective and much more accurate.

In particular, using the various methods is a necessary feature for all periods of the propagation. At the same time, all of them were based on the *Dhamma*, the *Sangha*, the Supporter, the equipment and digital media factors. In the present time, the support of such equipment and digital media, the *Buddhadhamma* can be effectively approach across all fields. Therefore, the ways of the propagation before and after the *Buddha's* period up to present time have played a very important role in preserving and propagating the *Buddhadhamma*. Besides, the adoption of modern equipment has proven to be a useful way in spread the *Buddhadhamma* around the world. And certainly, these ways of the propagation will still be improved to be more modern to propagate the *Buddhadhamma* in the new social contexts.

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