

The Influence Of Tebhūmikathā Literature On Thai Society

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ABSTRACT

Tebhūmikathā literature discussed the realms of heaven, world, and hell based on Buddhism, which tells the important aspect of people's fear of karma, badness. Tebhūmikathā literature is regarded as social norm from the past to the present. This literature has become a model of culture in art and literature. The teaching of goodness, badness, and about hell and heaven were derived from the concept of three worlds. Scared is used to make people fear to do sin instead of understanding Buddhist Dharma as what Lord Buddha wants. This leads the present to make people lack in their morals due to wrong teaching methods. When people are not scared of the belief of hell and heaven, there is nothing to do with to do good. For this reason, the author wants to study the influence of Tebhūmikathā literature on Thai society. Because this literature is still a valuable literature in terms of its characteristic and its contribution toward the Thai nation from the past to the present.

key words: Tebhūmikathā, Buddhism, Faith

INTRODUCTION

In this world, there are many literatures that have made a substantial influence on people and society. For instance, if the literature is about love, one tends to think of Romeo and Juliet. If it comes to the war side, a reader may think of Ramayana and Troy. In politics and governance the reader may think of the Three Kingdoms and when it comes to the religious side, one can think of the Mahabharata battle. All these stories have been accepted and influenced the people from the past to the present. In Thailand, there is a literature that has influenced Buddhism, politics, and beliefs of people. Despite that the present literature may have received less attention. But what makes this literature so important is that its legacy of beliefs and values. The sovereign has used this book as one of the norms of society in that era and still it is deeply rooted in the beliefs of Thai people irrespective of the time. Tebhūmikathā is such a great literary book.

Tebhūmikathā is a literature written by King Lithai. This is an important book in the period of Sukhothai kingdom and that tradition has been passed down to the present. Tebhūmikathā is a religious literature, which has made a great influence on Thai people. Tebhūmikathā has got a new name called Tribhūm Phra Ruang by the younger brother of King Rama V to honor Phra Ruang dynasty. The word “Tribhūm” means three worlds, three worlds consist of Sensuous Planes, Realms of Form and Formless Sphere.¹ Phra Maha Thammaracha Lithai (King Lithai) is the author of this literature.² It is considered as the first literary book of research was done from the 30 Buddhist scriptures.³ It has the characteristics of a complete book, which tells the name, day, month, year, and purpose of composing in its entirety. Phra Wachirayan Library has received

the Tebhūmikathā manuscript from Phetchaburi Province. It was written in Khmer alphabet on 10 palm leaf sets during the reign of King Thonburi. At the end of the book says that “Phra Maha Chuay engraved the Tebhūmikathā at Wat Pak Nam temple, the name of Wat Klang temple, already in the 4th month of the year of dog on Sunday at 3.00 p.m. When the Buddhist era ended in 1778, the last nine months and 26 days of the Buddha's custody were completed.” The statement does not include where Phra Maha Chuay received the origin from. Phra Wachirayan Library has translated the content into Thai characters without modifying the wrong words from the original text.

The aim of writing Tebhūmikathā literature is to explain and write a story on Buddhism and also to give a sermon to his mother. If anyone wants to attain Nibbāna, they should listen to the dharma from this book with faith in Buddhism. This shows that, the reason for writing the Tebhūmikathā literature in the beginning is to give sermons to his mother and to show his gratitude in some way. Another reason is to teach people to follow morals and to understand Buddhism in order to help sustainable Buddhism. This literature has a prose style, sermon style, and stylistic description. The content begins with the author's name, date, month, year and purpose of writing. It also includes the evidence for the compilation, followed by mentioning the three worlds, they are: Sensuous Planes, Realms of Form, and Formless Realms based on the power of the virtues and sins have done by the people in their lives.

The first realms, Sensuous Planes, are the lowest level of realms. This is the realms of those who are still trapped in greed, hatred and delusion of lust,⁴ which can be divided into two categories: Planes of misery (states of loss) and

Planes of Sensual happiness. Planes of misery (states of loss) are the realms of suffering, and has been divided into four realms: Niraya (woeful state, hell), Tiracchānayani (animal kingdom), Pittivisaya (ghost--sphere), and finally Asurakāya (host of demons).⁵

Planes of misery (States of loss and woe) are the region of the living things and those who made sin have to receive various punishments. The region can be divided into eight large abysses. In each hell there is another subclass, for example the abyss of hell named Lohasimpli is a hell and subordinate to Sanjiva Naraka. Those who commit adultery with other's husband or wife will fall into this abyss of hell and will be driven up by the guardian of hell to climb the Thorn--covered trees which a measure of length per tree 16 inches long. Adultery men and women must climb up and down by the guardian of hell, piercing up and down with a sharp spear for hundreds of years of hell.⁶

For those who have sin but not heavy enough to fall to the hell, they will be born in a realm where suffering is less than hell. But it is not comfortable because there are still suffering from the realm appearance due to the consequences of bad deed that a person have made when he was a human or an animal or Peta (Peta is a departed being, ghost and hungry ghost, which overall means the ghost of the departed)⁷ or Asurakāya (Asurakāya is a host of demons or the unrelenting, dejected, frightened ghosts).⁸ Those who are freed from hell and have a fragment of sin attached to them become animals, Peta, Asurakāya, and humans have become crippled by the weight of sin they have made.

The Sensuous Planes are Planes of Sensual happiness. Planes of Sensual happiness are divided into seven classes.⁹ The first class is human world. The second class named Cātumahārājikā, which is the realm of the Four Great Kings. The third class is the realm of the Thirty--three Gods (Tāvātimsā). The fourth class is the realm of the Yāma Gods (Yāmā). The fifth class is Tusitā, which is the realm of the satisfied gods. Next class named Nimmānaratī, which is the realm of the gods who rejoice in their own creations. And the last class of haven is the realm of gods who lord over the creation of others (Paranimmitavasavattī).¹⁰ The seven classes of Planes of Sensual happiness are location to lust, the sights of living things immersed in the sensual form, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Next realms are Realm of Form, which is a class that rise above the heavens with a total of 16 class. Those who are born in Brahma realms behave to meditate until they are attained.¹¹ From the first class to the eleventh class is the Brahma that can return to other realms if they die from Brahma realms, another 5 classes from eleventh class on are call Suddhāvāsa. This is the pure abode, which is the birth of Anāgāmī.¹² Anāgāmī means one who is a Non--Returner, one established in the Fruition of Non--Returning¹³ consisting of 5 class. The twelfth named Avihā that is the realm of Brahmas who do not fall from prosperity. Thirteenth is realm of Brahmas who are serene (Atappā). Next class is Sudassā which is the realm of Brahmas who are beautiful. And then, fifteenth named Sudassī this is the realm of Brahmas who are clear--sighted. Final class is the realm of the highest or supreme Brahmas

(Akanitṭhā).¹⁴ The Realm of Form sixteenth class starts from the realms of Brahmāpārisajjā are the realms above the sixth heaven class, Paranimmitavasavattī.¹⁵ The distance cannot be counted due to the vastness. The distance may be measured by a stone as big as a metal castle in the Lanka continent. The stone was dropped from the realms of Brahmāpārisajjā. It took four months to fall to the ground complete.

From realms of Brahmāpārisajjā up to the eleventh class named Asaññīsattā, these realms are the Realm of Form that has a strange shape from other Brahma (Brahma in Hinduism is the creator the Universal, but Brahma in Buddhism is a brahma god, which is divine being of the Form Sphere and the Formless Sphere that is inhabitant of the higher heavens¹⁶). The Brahma in the Form sphere have Forms, feelings and is able to move, but Brahma in the class of Asaññīsattā has a form that is not moving, without verses. When it expires, contemplation will deteriorate and will continue to be born in karma. Realm of Form five classes higher than Asaññīsattā are called Suddhāvāsa, referring to the address of pure abodes. A person who will be born in the Suddhāvāsa class is a holy persons of the Anāgāmī. All Anāgāmī will succeed Arahanta and enter Nibbāna in the Suddhāvāsa class.¹⁷

Formless Sphere or immaterial states have four class Brahma with no form appearing. Those who are born in these realms are those who asceticism until they attained the highest contemplation of mundane class called Arūpāvacarabhūmi.¹⁸ When these Brahma are lost from meditation, will be reborn in the Realm of Form or other realms as well. There is also a talk about rebirth of living things. Based on the

birth of living things there are four types of living things in the three worlds: The viviparous (Jalābuja) which is born from the mother's womb, i.e. the birth of humans and animals. The next form is the oviparous (Aṇḍaja) which is born from an egg, such as birds, some reptiles, fish, etc. Then the next is Putrescence--born creatures (Saṃsedaja) which is born from putrescence or moisture, i.e. animals that use divisions of body to give birth such as Hydra, Amoeba, etc. Finally, Spontaneously born creatures (Opapātika) which is happened spontaneously apparitional.¹⁹ Those are born completely after death and they are not babies: Peta, ghosts, unhappy spirits, demons, Asurakāya, gods and Brahma, among others.²⁰As for the death of living things, there are four causes of death: death occurred due to expiration age, death due to karma, death due to age and karma, and accidental death.

Besides, that things in the world and in the universe have mentioned. There is an age set for living things and also there are three worlds: eon, aeon, end of the world, birth of the world, creation of the world and earth are built according to Brahmanism. And finally, the literature mentions Nibbāna's successful attainment of Nibbāna through various the holy forms. How to practice to attain Nibbāna is one of the ways of Buddhism.²¹ When this literature was published to the people, it caused a change in society especially in Sukhothai kingdom and its effect towards the present. Moreover, the value of this literature is not only depends on the value of art created language, but also has a value in religion, social, philosophical, artistry, and education as well. The vast influences that Tebhūmikathā literature on Thai society has made the author want to study the influence of Tebhūmikathā literature on Thai society. Even

though the literature has appeared in the past and still it continues its influence till date. Furthermore, Tebhūmikathā literature is still deeply rooted in the way of life and is expected to continue in the future.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEBHŪMIKATHĀ ON BELIEF, RELIGION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF THAI SOCIETY

The influence of the book "Tebhūmikathā" has many. The motto of three worlds in Buddhism gave rise to Tebhūmikathā. Tebhūmikathā is the first volume of Buddhist literature and secular literature written in Thai.²² It is accepted that this literature has been searched from the books of Buddhism and still some Thai scholars considered this literature is to be Thailand's first Buddhist thesis. This literature has had a great influence on the way of life of Thai people and Thai society from the Sukhothai kingdom to the present day. The main influences from Tebhūmikathā are beliefs about sin, merit, and death; rebirth in three worlds, and breaking free from the cycle of birth and death when approaching Nibbāna. These kinds of beliefs are the main essence of Buddhism.

The book Tebhūmikathā is considered a moral teaching book. The story of the book is about sin, merit, birth, death, about the three worlds. During that era, it was the period when the Khmer Empire had just collapsed. When a great empire fell, people were evacuated. Sukhothai kingdom is a prosperous kingdom, therefore the main goal of people to move their families to find a place to eat, to trade. In the beginning, Sukhothai Kingdom was not a big kingdom and was ruling under the regime of paternalism. In this regime, the monarch has to govern or solve various problems of the people by himself. The verdict and lawsuit was set by him. People may come and complain about their sufferings at the palace, in case when more

people come to the kingdom the governance will become difficult. In addition, the number of lawsuits has increased. Thus, the literature was used as a norm for social values to instill people's sense of scare on sin and punishment and scare of wrongdoing. Suppose they have done anything wrong, they still have to be punished by the law of the country and additionally they have to pay for their own mistakes in the next life after death. Such beliefs have been carried out to the present. These thoughts it can be seen in the beliefs of Thai people about their fear of sin that lead people due to hell and fear of suffering after death. This shows that, Tebhūmikathā literature have made social and cultural contributions towards the Thai society in the past as well as to the present.

This shows that, Buddhism has influenced the beliefs of Thai people before the Sukhothai kingdom. Later, when civilization from India entered the region, there is a wide spreading of Brahmanism and Buddhism respectively, especially Theravada Buddhism. Then it is said that, the belief in Tribhūm is a stratagem of the King that he used to rule the country. The king of Sukhothai kingdom encouraged people to believe in the law of karma, doing good things give good things, doing bad things give bad things. When one can believe, he has to practice himself in order to get a good life in his present life and in the next life.

In addition to the role of literature that has been practiced in the present. The author has also played a role for the next generation as well as for the king of the next generation. The role of Phra Maha Thammaracha Lithai (King Lithai) is more important and will influence the Thai society in future. It can be divided into two parts, is the part of His Majesty the King's duties in upholding Buddhism in the construction of temples, Buddha statue, painting the picture of the Buddha's history and his allegory on stone tablets. All of which are Buddhist art that has

been practiced in the Ayutthaya kingdom, Thonburi kingdom, and Rattanakosin periods without interruption. Perhaps, the appearance may change according to the era. The most obvious is the influence of literature from the period of Ayutthaya kingdom to the early Rattanakosin period. More than 90% of the Thai literature are Buddhist literature and are related to the law of karma, which means doing good thing will give good thing, doing bad thing will give bad thing. This led to the creation of innovations and based on this regard it is connected with cosmology, hell, heaven, and the law of karma till it becomes inseparable. The second part as for the royal rites, there are personal practices of the king in performing the basis of meritorious action consist of charity, morality, and meditation. The king was ordained in 1905 at Wat Pa Mamuang temple in Sukhothai era. It is the first monarch to be ordained during his reign as a model till today. Most importantly, many monarchs were poets and authors, while they nurtured literature to flourish in every era.²³

However, when analyzing the social context in the Sukhothai kingdom, it was found that when the King talked or communicated with the people, it was done through Buddhist monk. One of the things that the King talked about was Tebhūmikathā literature. Because this literature was written by King Lithai, who was the king of Sukhothai kingdom and it is a story about Buddhism. And this literature is used as a social norm to encourage people to practice the teachings of Lord Buddha by pointing out the importance and benefits of "to do good" and to receive the penalty for doing badness and one has to face the consequences of karma when he die. However, in the later period, especially the Ayutthaya kingdom to the present the Buddhist monks use the concept from Tebhūmikathā literature or other literature that has been

influenced by this literature in propagating Buddhist Dharma principles. Tebhūmikathā literature has mentioned various realms in the round of rebirth, the benefits of goodness and the evils of badness. But it is undeniable that this literature has inspired other literatures afterwards. Some of them are characterized by clear descriptions of hell and heaven. The concept of hell and heaven in the literature got the inspiration from the Buddhist scriptures. In the Tripitaka, there is a less depiction on the story of hell and heaven. And the atmosphere in each realm is not described as thoroughly as in this literature. Because of the nature of the content that describes the horribleness, suffering and hardship from hell realms, and then it describes heaven which is the dwelling place of gods still in Sensuous Planes. The higher class is the class of the virtuous; the class of conducting oneself to practice the dharma and meditate. In the lower class section, there is also alcohol, music, sex to get. That makes people understand the level of happiness that they can experience and wish to get them, if they have done good things and up to will of heaven. If they cannot go to higher class, they are still happy without suffering in hell. That's why people focus on to do good to escape from the sufferings after death and escape from hell and they desired to enjoy heaven rather than to reach Nibbāna.

The Thai society often said, “Do a lot of good deeds to be reborn in heaven. As for doing a lot of bad things when you die, you will fall in hell.” This is a set of beliefs from the past, which is inherited and the belief is deeply rooted in the fundamental conscience of Thai people. This is undeniable from the concept of Buddhism “Do good get good, do bad get bad” that Buddhist monks often used to teach people. Derived from the proverb “to do good, not to do any evil and to purify the mind” And from this proverb, why is it changed to “Do good get good, do bad get bad” and “Do a lot of good deeds to be reborn in heaven as for doing a lot of

bad things when you die, you will fall hell”. From the words that have changed slightly but the meaning has changed greatly. Because to do good, not to do any evil and to purify the minds. Lord Buddha insists to focus on action, both in goodness, doing good, not to do any evil, have conscience and moral dread, self--restraint, and the most important thing is to purify the mind. It is a practice that aims to train oneself is important wherewith to ignore the consequences of action. This concept is the important focus of Lord Buddha.

But when this saying reaches the present it becomes “Do good get good, do bad get bad” and “Do a lot of good deeds to be reborn in heaven as for doing a lot of bad things when you die, you will fall hell”. It shows that this teaching has a goal that focuses on the consequences of action rather than actions. For instance, if looking at the matter of reciprocal deeds, the consequences of karma are things that can have many results. It depends on the factors, conditions, merit or consequences of bad deed that human's have. So, calculating the result must match what a person did is almost impossible. And from many people look at the consequences of action causing merit to expect the result. Because they have the same purpose, nobody want to suffer; they want only good things to come in their lives. The idea of hell and heaven leads to the consequences of good action, the characteristics of having support and having clear place. This is undeniably based on the ideas from the past Tebhūmikathā literature. Since Tebhūmikathā literature is Thailand's first literature on Buddhism, and has influence in the aspect of being an inspiration for new generations of poets to write on various literatures. Most of the literature that has arisen afterwards is mostly on Buddhist literature. Especially, during the Ayutthaya kingdom which is the next kingdom from the Sukhothai kingdom, there are many literature have been seen and even textbooks are there which are

based on Buddhism.²⁴ To emphasize the idea of “To do good” in order to go to heaven. “To do good” to accumulate merit which helps people not to fall into the hell and getting suffer from suffering. In particular, a literature that is influenced by Tebhūmikathā literature is the literature called Phra Malai Kham luang. This literature has been very popular in the Ayutthaya kingdom. It is the story of a Buddhist monk named Malai has entered contemplation and traveled to hell and heaven. Hell and Heaven are described in this literature in detail. Emphasizing the idea of hell and heaven to penetrate people's minds about the concept of fear of “Do badness,” because a person will fall hell and want to do good in order to get heaven. When people believe that “To do good”, at death they will enjoy happiness in heaven again, alcohol, sex, all the nourishment of worldly happiness. It makes people focus on to do good in this life because they want happiness in next life. Moreover, people scare to go hell, which makes people want to do good. This is a good thing when looking at the social aspect that happens; people want to do good deed and less doing of bad thing. Until sometimes there is a competition to do good deed, such as a race to build a big and beautiful temple. It's a race to donate more money than others, believing that doing more will get more good results, but is this really the best idea. A specific look at the details of the heavenly level of happiness and analyse how it can be obtained. And if a person follows ten precepts, he can find what he's refraining in heaven, consisting of sexual misconduct, alcohol intoxicant that makes him unconscious, perfume, soft mattress. Is this all the good deed in this life to break the precept in heaven?

For this reason, nowadays, in doing merit or to do good deed of Thai people tend to look at the result that will be rewarded for doing

to do good rather than doing the mental action to focus on to do good because all are good people, and they have good thinking ability or eager to know goodness and badness. These aspects of Thai people nowadays make them to have the characteristics of giving offerings to the spirits, make a wish in various places by making things, meat dish, sweetmeat, dessert to offer in holy places for making a good wish. Then they also make a wish about fortune and making a wish to get the correct number for trying to get luck in the lottery. The behavior of these people is not at all the guide from the teachings of Lord Buddha. After analysing, it is found that it corresponds to the “beliefs of other sects” that Buddhists must know is not the way of Buddhism. The first doctrine is called Pubbekatavāda. This doctrine believes that one's life will get better or worse from the consequences of karma that he done in the past. The second doctrine is Issarakaraṇavāda. This doctrine believes that the Supreme Being has already defined human lives for better or for worse and all the actions of man is determined from the thoughts of the Supreme Being. The last doctrine is Ahetuvāda. This doctrine believes that everything in this world is all accidental and has no origin.²⁵ From people's behavior match a determinist theory that whatever is experienced is due to past actions and a determinist theory that whatever is experienced is due to the creation of a Supreme Being. It makes people believe that if to do good, the consequences of good deed will definitely repay that person. And, if that person brings things and making foods as offerings to the spirits, make a wish. Sacred things will see man's goodness and inspire people about success, fortune, and what is requested. But if considering worship, oblation, and consequence of karma in Buddhism, it is effective. Wherewith, in the teaching about false view said those who think that worship, oblation and

consequence of karma have no effect is a misunderstanding. But, Buddhism did not the focus of worship, oblation, the blessings of others, the consequences of karma that people can do until he does not use their own abilities or struggle on their own. And Lord Buddha taught that the importance of one's dependence on oneself. It means human have to use one's abilities before asking others. Otherwise that man will become a lazy person and rely on fate. When the opportunity comes, that time a person was not prepared. The opportunity will slip away. In the end, he blames his destiny for not seizing the opportunity to succeed.²⁶

In the end, people focus on to do good in order to get rich, succeed in the life, then go to heaven in their afterlife and also focus on enjoying happiness rather than reaching Nibbāna. Because of the false teachings, using scare to intimidate people instead of educating, understanding, and teaching the right things. As a result people become neglecting Nibbāna, sees Nibbāna as distant. It is very difficult that this life cannot be done, until reaching the top, people have to accumulate goodness, accumulate many realms, and life even above the heaven is called Brahma's realm. This reduces the value of Nibbāna because it makes people to view it as difficult and higher so that few people can reach it. Since the Buddhist monk has taught people with this concept for so long that it has become the fundamental belief of Buddhism in Thai style. This is a chance for a Buddhist monk to use this to find a thing of value that supporter gives to the monks, till there is a lot of news nowadays. The hell and heaven belief is still not proven as a material object to be true or not. This makes people less interested in to do good because attraction is a place after death is unclear. Moreover from that, reciprocal deeds are dissatisfied, people expecting results rather than actions and let them on. As a result

of wrong teachings, makes the accumulation of loss of faith in Buddhism and for people who do not understand the context of Buddhism.

Moreover, this scared tutorial might work for some people, but not for everyone. If applied to people with a mentally unstable and fragile it can have serious consequences. As the news of Thailand reports that, the Dharma camps “Dharma camps” in Thai language “ค่ายธรรมะ” and can use that “ค่ายจริยธรรม” which means “Morality camp” at temple among youths is one of the most popular in school activities. There is a belief in Thailand that, if a child is brought to the temple and listen to dharma will make the child obedient, moral, and will become a good adult. But, the problem is that there are many complaints about teaching methods, because of using gruesome images of the animals being slaughtered in slaughter houses. And even about giving birth to hardship of mothers to emphasize the concept of gratitude which is an important identity of Thai society. From the results of the camp, some results of them are good, but some results show that the organizations have pressured the characteristics and emphasizing fear to them. Causing some of participants to be psychologically affected, some are even in clinical depression. In medicine, teaching with the use of scare and pressure is incapable of making human to think. It was news in society for a while. Born after a child has returned from a Dharma camp at a temple. Which cause a lot of criticism in society. Because many people who have been joined to the Dharma camp in different places, but they have had experience the same.²⁷ It makes people who are pressured on their thoughts and minds become more obedient and imitated than acting with a common sense of critical thinking. Using scare to teach people in the beginning works well because terrible image made people feel awed that makes them feel dare to commit

mistakes. From this incident, some monks, scholars and doctor have expressed their opinions in the same. But this kind of camp is always held because the adults believe that the Dharma camp and morality camp can make children obey and be good as they want.²⁸ But is the stratagem of scare really the right way to use it on peoples? Because people are afraid of hell than seeing sin as something wrong, bad, and mistakes should not be done, according to the Right Understanding, Right Thought of the Noble Eightfold Path.

At present, technology has been developed according to scientific principles; many beliefs have been proven which are both real and unreal. It makes people look for something that are more tangible and verifiable than fables and stories. Hell is one of those imaginary tales that reads from Tripitaka and literature, or told from the dead and revived in the news rather than having a clear concrete proof. This made people not scared of falling to hell and starts to question whether hell is really exist. So, people started to ignore to do good as well as afraid of doing evil. Because, they do not see that they do not exist, they realized death is the end, so one has to take advantage of one's own happiness first. Sometimes one's happiness is an encroachment and cause sufferings to others. That is why there are many social problems in the present society and this tendency will increase in the future.

Using scared to teach people might be easy way to do and get results quickly and can see physically visible results. But, the long-term effect is not the correct approach. Because religion is rooted from scared and lack of essential knowledge. The lack of essential knowledge is the root cause of dependent on becoming rise in birth, dependent on birth arise decay and death and wandering in the round of

rebirth on the basis of the dependent origination. This shows that the dependency is the root cause of all sufferings. As if a man started planting a good tree, but he has brought poison to watering the plant instead of watering the plant with plain water in order to grow fast and yields quick results. Man look at results more than methods. And this evidently shows the wrong approach because the use of pure water is like watering the dharma that is socially correct and an essential factor that plants need. This will make the tree to grow properly and yields good for the society and also good for the world. Conversely, Thai society uses poison water to good trees with the hope that tree has been taken the poison and reminds to grow into a good tree according to its cultivar which is beneficial to the society and also good for the world. They have chosen good plants, but they choose wrong methods to care. The results may be good at first because this is a good pedigree, but the same procedure is used for the long term, the poison has penetrated into the every parts of the tree. That tree has become completely poisonous and remains rooted in society. This tree is Buddhism that has thrived in society, because people in the past had seen the picture of goodness of the seed and saw this as being beneficial and good to Thai society. But people continued to pour poison. And nowadays the poison has eaten the plants till the tree deteriorates. A lot of people have begun to lose faith in that tree. On considering, this is not the tree's fault, because people in the society use the wrong methods to care for the tree which makes problem in the society. This shows that the people of the society failed to handle Buddhism in a right way.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEBHŪMIKATHĀ ON LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The most obvious influence of Tebhūmikathā in literature has always been the building of strong faith in the Buddhists. In addition, the Tebhūmikathā literature also made an influence

on beliefs about the age of the world, the end of the world, the creation of the world, the cosmic geography, the hell, the heaven, the Gods, the Himmapan forest and the Himmapan wildlife.²⁹ Himmapan wildlife are special creatures born from imagination. These animals are found in various Thai literature and various works of art. It is considered one of the Thai art as well.³⁰ The imagination of the ancient poets explain and support such beliefs through wonderful imaginations and that has been remembered as allusion, inherited and perpetuation in various types of literature in different periods of the past to the present.³¹

Although in literature the Tebhūmikathā had a great influence, especially on the visual arts and religious architecture. But the manuscript was probably not much widespread. Somdej Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanupap (King Rama V's younger brother) said that, besides in the picture books and paintings on the temple walls, he could not find Tebhūmikathā book on the Ayutthaya kingdom. Understanding that it will be lost when the loss of Ayutthaya kingdom. Therefore, during the reign of King Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok Maharaj the Great (King Rama I), allowed the patriarch and the member of the Royal Institute to help to compose the book of Tebhūmikathā in the year 1783 C.E. 19 years later, he thought that the Tribhūm book that he had written was not perfect because it was not equal wherewith there were many authors. So, he ordered Phraya Thammapreecha (Kaew) to compose the book once again. This royal edition of the Tebhūmikathā is called Tribhūm Loka Winijchai.

The content is divided into 4 parts: 1 Manussa Part: It is a reference to the world inhabited by human beings. 2. The Nirayakatha

part: It talks about Hell, which is the land of suffering for those who practice evil. 3. The Deva part: It talks about the various levels of heaven, as well as describing the story of the Gods in detail. 4. Visutthikatha part: It talks about practices that should be a guideline for the attainment of pure Dharma and attaining Nibbāna. From that, this literature has been used to describe the rhetoric in detail to make it real. The book depicts the terrifying state of Hell and the blissful state of Heaven. Until then the painter was able to convey the description into a picture. In addition, there is an influence on later literature, bringing various beliefs to make reference in Thai literature such as the history of Gods, Khao Phra Sumeru Mountain which is considered the center of the universe according to the three world's concept,³² Himmapan forests, etc. After that, later eras have introduced religious concepts, beliefs or guidelines to intervene. This book has a greater influence on other literature in later periods such as Ramayana, Khaki Kham Khon, Khun Chang KhunPhaen, etc. And also gave rise to other literatures.³³

Literature is influenced by Tebhūmikathā and the one of the concepts is that the belief of hell and heaven in Thai society as seen in the literature of Phra Malai Kham luang. Phra Malai Kham luang is a Buddhist literature that has mentioned Phra Malai, a Buddhist monk who accumulated enormous merit that he has gained ultra-conscious insight. He used this contemplation to travel to hell, heaven, and meets Indra. Indra in Buddhism is the position of gods, the ruler of Tāvātimsā (the realm of the Thirty--three Gods) and, when the merits are finished, he can go to be born in other realms.³⁴ In addition to meet Indra in heaven, he also meets the next Bodhisattva who will turn the

world to in Utopia. This literature describes the atmosphere of hell and heaven. The each divisions of class are based according to the three worlds in detail. It makes the conception of the people in society about hell and heaven. And it paved a place of clarity, which led the poets of the latter periods to drive ideas from both literatures to create novels. In the present times, it has developed and the concept has been taken as movies, radio dramas, television series, and theater dramas. This usually ends in getting consequences of karma according to the principle of "Do good get good, do bad get bad."³⁵ Through emphasizing the horrible and dreadful images, and depicting the images of hardships and sufferings of hell. Then also emphasizing the images of happiness and brightness then followed by the description of cosines and daintiness of heaven. To encourage awareness about the ideology of "Do a lot of good deeds to be reborn in heaven. As for doing a lot of bad things when you die, you will fall hell." This is considered as a cultural reproduction of the preaching of scared hell rather than the realization of immoral thing is bad. Because it is encroaching on others, causing suffering to oneself and others, furthermore it can cause social problems. The thought of scared hell is the main goal of cultural reproduction that cannot make people aware. At the same time, social problems will arise because people are not to do good, not to do any evil from the true understanding of Buddhism principles.

Since Lord Buddha said to do good, not to do any evil and to purify the mind. While considering the main idea of to do good, do good thing a wholesome is something that does hurts others, which comes from understanding the principles of Buddhism. Later is not to do any evil that comes from abstinence from things that will make human lives worse, not self--

inflicted and others, having conscience and moral dread is to restrain. When doing anything that will have an effect on the side of self--inflicted and others. And finally what the Lord Buddha emphasizes is to purify the mind. To purify the mind is to make one's mind pure, cheerful, and free from all defilements: greed, hatred, delusion, be conscious, concentrate and do not underestimate their own lifestyle in each second. But Thai society repeats the teachings about hell and heaven and even about the three worlds. This concept appears in the way of life, beliefs, and basic principles of life. Its identity is expressed through the attitude of Thai people and art in their country from the past to the present.

The foreigners may enter Thailand through various airlines and they will find a statue of Thai art and that is an animal figure from the concept of Tebhūmikathā literature. Moreover while traveling to various places even in their own country Thai people will able to see the arts whether they may be a painting or an architecture, which are almost get inspiration from the motto of the three worlds. It shows that the three world's principle is deeply rooted in the concept and minds of Thai people. The reason is that the concept of three worlds has been deeply rooted in Thainess since the Sukhothai kingdom, wherewith the cultural reproduction that has been arise for a long duration. This may be due to the adoption of the three world's principle as a social motto for public order in Thailand. The principles are come from the teachings of Buddhist monks from the concept of Buddhism. And another important reason is their literature. As for it is a general concept that the literature can be easily access by the minds of the people and it can influence people's feeling and can able to guide or it can change the society. Therefore, the literature on three worlds is the beginning point for this motto that has influenced and inspired many Buddhist literatures in later eras. The

literatures emerged in the latter era have an idea or a story comes from the beliefs of the three worlds. Even today, it can be found in new literature. Each year there will always be a literature that is influenced by the three worlds, and it creates a question mark in the mind whether it is a good reproduction based on the idea.

If the cultural reproduction of the three worlds is derived from the correct concept of beliefs, teaching, principles, and methods of Buddhism, then the concept can be a great benefit to the society. But, why nowadays Thai society has serious problems? When looking deeper into the many of the problems that arise in the society, one can find that, many problems are from Thai traditional culture and that has been deeply rooted, so they are difficult to solve. Then one can find that some of those cultures are heavily influenced by the three world's principle. This will raise a question--Why do religious concepts cause social controversies? On considering that, the problem is not with the concept of three worlds or with the teachings of Buddhism. But the problem lies in how to preach the concept and in the way of handling the concept. All religions in the world are beliefs and are based on the peacefulness of the society. All religion focuses on good people. But the methods of preaching religion and religious concept, which includes the application of the concept of three worlds to teach people, are completely unprofitable. Teaching people or even raising children, Thai people used the concept of scared. For example, the Thai proverb says, "If you love your cow, tie it up. If you love your children, you've get to spank them sometime" which means when it comes to raising their own children they have to beat and teach them to be disciplined. The concept of scared is used here; fear of being hurt by parents, or fear of doing wrong, if they do so they must be punished, and also get hurt, be pained or feel bad. Religious teaching in

Thailand has a similar teaching method, by using scared technique. "Scared," is not a hit, but scared of being punished and fear of getting hell if he does badness. And if to do good, the reward is go to heaven to enjoy happiness as a result of good deeds. This concept does not correspond to the basic concept of Buddhism because Buddhism wants people to do good wherewith they practice right. The knowledge of doing good things comes from the understanding of Dharma. It is called as the Eye of Truth. And not to do any evil is abstain from the cause of ruin or all things that cause suffering not out of fear of falling to hell. But it has to come from the fundamental understanding of what is bad and to categorize it is a bad thing which is bad to himself and bad to others.

Perhaps, people use scare to teach people, the result is that people see hell and heaven as one of the goals of Buddhism. In fact, Lord Buddha wants people to be free from the round of rebirth or to reach Nibbāna, not to just enjoy the happiness of heaven and then reborn again and again endlessly. From that, people's focus on heaven has made people to forget about what is their true goal. The true goal is known as Nibbāna. And, most importantly, it is the important point that Buddhist monks tend to use to find values of things that the supporters give to the monks till they come in the news of nowadays. What makes this concept still deeply rooted and emphasized in the conception of Thai people is through literature and movies. Movies shown in theatres or in television series are all based on the concept of hell and heaven, and do goodness to get heaven and do evil to fall into the hell. Whoever does badness will have to face the consequences of karma; whoever does good will receives the rewards of good deed. It is a popular story base and has been inserted this idea into the content of the play for a long time. It makes people understand that is right, and that is the concept of Buddhism. But, in fact, the correct teachings and beliefs should be

emphasized and instilled in the knowledge and understanding of the concept rather than emphasizing scared. Eventually, it should be educated that, religion begins with ignorance and scare. But now they have religion, they know, they should not scare and they should do the things right. Religion is not teaching a person should scare and to follow religious beliefs without understanding the primary objectives of religion. Thus, the wrong teachings and the wrong approaches also caused people to distance themselves from religion. Stay away from thing has called “to do good, not to do any evil” as it said, the plant that had been watered poison and no matter how good the seed is and how strong the tree is, but finally in the future the plant will become a poisonous tree anyway.

TEBHŪMIKATHĀ'S INFLUENCE ON ARTISTRY

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

In addition to religion, social culture, and literature, the story of Tebhūmikathā literature also has contributions to the arts. The influence in the arts can be divided into two forms: Architecture and Painting influence. In architecture and sculpture, it was found that it would not be so popular to make it look outstanding as the center of the universe. But it is popular to create harmony in the midst of the nature. This belief in the three worlds was found in the creation of the royal crematorium, royal fire ceremony burial and funeral. When the member of the royal family ascended to death, then the description becomes a masterpiece of art and that has been passed down to the present. The ceremony of Royal Funeral has many procedures and methods. No matter how social trends change. However, this ceremony of Royal Funeral still retains quite complete details. This consists of ideas according to ideology and art in various fields, as well as creating wonderful

designs.³⁶ Suitable for the status of the King or His Highness, that is the Royal crematorium, which has completely conveyed the concept of three worlds.³⁷ In addition, the motto of three worlds has also been transmitted to architecture, for example, in the walls of the temple with the church as the center. There is a pagoda surrounded by mountains, etc. This can be seen clearly in Wat Pho temple, Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram temple or Wat Phra Kaew temple, etc. There are also various gable art works which include building a pagoda with a descending number of floors, usually 31 floors. This shows the total number of realms in the three worlds which has 31 realms according to the concept of cosmology. Then it has been created in the form of architecture and sculpture with city and temple planning. The most obvious is the artistry of temples in Thailand that are popularly built according to the motto of three worlds' principles.³⁸ In addition to temples, the three world's principle also appears in the construction of sculptures to decorate buildings such as Himmapan wildlife, mythical creature, angle and various fairly classes, which are derived from the inspiration of Tebhūmikathā literature. Even though the concept is based on the three worlds' principle, the center is Khao Phra Sumeru Mountain. The construction of the pavilion in the ceremony of a member of the royal family and the construction of the royal crematorium are based on the same principle. Even the creation of the royal chariot and royal yacht are beyond explanation and they are as beautiful as heaven which also comes from the concept of Tebhūmikathā.

PAINTING

The influence of Tebhūmikathā literature and its belief has also been found in the paintings. The paintings reflect the belief of Buddhism which

can be seen in various forms according to the individuality. Artworks reflect the beliefs related to the Buddha are often found in Buddhist art, whereas beliefs in the three worlds associated with the King are often found in art and architecture found in the Grand Palace, etc. The Buddhist Jātaka painting recipe on the temple walls, especially behind the main Buddha image, is a subject of the universes or realms of the three worlds. The reason for drawing these stories behind the main Buddha image is to remind those who come to worship will realize that this world is impermanent. Humans have to fall into the cycle of death and rebirth in transmigration. Therefore, human should aim for Nibbāna. The real happiness can be found in the Buddha image that represents Buddhism in front of humans. Three worlds and the Tāvātimsā are played an influential role in sculpture and painting. Painting works are popular in writing pictures on cloth by drawing the story of the Lord Buddha. Drawing and writing a picture of Buddha's biography, when the Buddha came from the Tāvātimsā, such as the Buddha image from Wat Kru Ngerm temple, Chiang Mai.³⁹

Paintings in the temples reflect the concept of Buddhism. Most of them appeared in the paintings tell the story of Buddha's history, Jātaka, folk literature, and also convey the meanings through the shape of the symbols. In the past, people have adhered to the motto of three worlds, which is used to divide the world into three worlds and have 31 realms. The importance of the cities in the perimeter is organized according to the importance of religious places of that city. The artists have created paintings with the power of true faith by telling the story of various realms such as hell, heaven and the human world based on the Buddhist principles such as concerning the mundane worlds, supramundane worlds, and the three characteristics of existence, and the

dependent origination. It is conveyed through exquisite forms that are rich in the details of the paintings. And these arts can reflect the way of life of people in the past, their social conditions, culture and their customs. These cultural and social aspects are the special characteristics of the local area and the evidence that shows the existence and continuation of Thai cultural society as well⁴⁰

Wherewith, Tebhūmikathā literature still influences the mindsets and beliefs of Thai people even in this contemporary period. This book is like an inspiration to people who aim to do good because they have a clear vision. There are stories that can be recognized that one's good deeds will surely bring good results whether it happens in the present or in the future, or even after one's death. And it is like a framework for people who think about doing evil, that if they think about doing evil, how they will get their karma for their evil deeds. Then, it becomes the model of architecture of the past and continued to the present. The story of Tebhūmikathā literature is an inspiration for fantasies about life after death. This has been reflected in the form of wall paintings and statues and reflected even in general folk rituals while make arrangements for a corpse. The rituals like arrangement of the hands of corpse together and put incense and the lotus flower. It is believed that when a person died, he would go to pay homage to Phra Chulamanee that contains the Buddha's relics in the Tāvātimsā. The art of communicating the three worlds concept with art is widely accessible to people and is highly effective in communicating with people of all levels, especially in cultivating moral beliefs. This depicts how people get penalty for doing evil and also how people get the result of doing good for Buddhists in Thailand all along.

CONCLUSION

Tebhūmikathā literature is Buddhist literature which tells the clearest examples of belief about hell, heaven, sin, and merit of Thai society. It can be said that Tebhūmikathā literature reflects that Buddhist philosophy is the basis of Thai philosophy, which this literature reaches people through the thoughts of Buddhist monks. For which the government used religious concepts derived from this literature as a popularity and as a social norm in those days and it still continued in the present. The story of Tebhūmikathā talks about realms according to Buddhism beliefs about various realms like hell, heaven, and Brahma. If people want to reach those places, they must rely on the consequences of merit or the consequences of karma that the person was done when they were human. This makes people scared of sin, doing badness, violence, and encroachment to others. Moreover, these are against the moral of religion and those who break these principles will be punished by hell after death. The way of teaching in faith use a scared teaching method and this will give quick results, but they do not use the proper understanding of the right principles of religion to teach people. And also uses scared as a means of tool to awaken the consciousness of the people which cause many social problems. Such problems will continue to follow in present and may be in future. What happens is that instead of people understanding that they to do good because they understand the truth. But people do good, doing merit in order to expecting good or divine results. To allow one to get what he asks, this is not the way of Buddhism at all. People make merit in the hope that they can reborn in heaven after death, and they do not want to fall in hell because of the hardships they get after death. It is not depend on “to do good” because it is correct but it shows people not truly understand the principle of Buddhism. People lack in morality because they do not understand the full truth. Even a Buddhist monk uses this

chance to find thing of value that supporter gives to them that cause many social problems.

In addition to social influence, another thing makes Tebhūmikathā is considered to be the origin of Thai culture and art, this is because most of Thai art comes from the concept of Tebhūmikathā and Buddhism. Both the paintings and architectures have shown the importance of Tebhūmikathā in various places and in every region of Thailand. Therefore, it can be said that Buddhism and the three world’s concepts are the origin of Thai art. It is clearly stated that Tebhūmikathā is the origin of Thai cultural art. It has made reproduction and emphasizes the belief of hell and heaven from the concept of people’s minds for a long time. The prolonged use of Tebhūmikathā as an inspiration for literature after the Sukhothai kingdom era continues until the present. Emphasizing this idea through paintings of places including hell and heaven, Himmaman wildlife, and Gods in beautiful places stated that if people do good, they will be born in heaven and have beautiful clothes and happy in life rather than emphasizing the reach of Nibbāna, which is Buddhism’s ultimate goal. In addition to art in various places and through movies and TV shows, the stories have been raised about this belief every year. It is considered to emphasize this idea in the thought picture to deepen the beliefs of people. But one can ask that the real problem of Thai society comes from the literature or not, then the answer must be no. Because the problem is in the usage of literature and how they utilized the literature as a tool. The wrong teaching methods neglect to say what the Lord Buddha really wants. Lord Buddha really wants people to see the reality of the truth rather than seeing the truth with scared eyes. In the present, the wrong moral teaching has made Thai society become a society that lacks morality. And causing continual problems since the past to the present and it is expected to continue for a long time if there is no change is

occured. As a Buddhist monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu once said, if Morality does not return to people's heart, the world will come to an end.

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