

THE TEMPLE OF DAWN IN TRANSITION

JUDHAPHAN PADUNCHEWIT

National Institute of Development Administration, Bangkok, Thailand,

The Songkran Water Festival, the traditional Thai New Year Celebration and one of Thailand's most joyous national holidays, at the Temple of Dawn during April 11 – 15, was as spectacular and grand as it had been in previous years. Held in front of the Temple at *Lan Bhodhi* (the Main Ground of Bhodhi Leaves), the 2013 Temple fair, with the theme "Making Merit: Dousing the Buddha Images in the 13 Temples," was a delightful event for all who participated, from Bangkokians and local visitors to festival goers from afar who came to make religious merit in an ambience of peace, harmony, and *sanuk* (fun).

A central part of the festival for Thais and foreign tourists alike was the lighting of the candle, which was then placed among the other candles in a row in front of the Buddha images. Flowers were then placed in water and incense sticks were lit from the candle and held between the palms in a *wai* on the chest. Sitting quietly in the respect position, the Thai participants would silently recite some prescribed phrases of praise in the Pali language of the Buddhist scriptures. The incense sticks were then stuck into a container of sand, after which a square of gold leaf was pressed onto a Buddha image. Worshippers concluded their act of devotion with the triple obeisance before going out to engage in the joyous tradition of splashing water on one another.

The author developed the case for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of the situation. The case and its accompanying instructor's manual were anonymously peer reviewed and accepted by the *Journal of Case Research and Inquiry*, Vol. 1, 2015, a publication of the Western Casewriters Association. The author and the *Journal of Case Research and Inquiry* grant state and nonprofit institutions the right to access and reproduce this manuscript for educational purposes. For all other purposes, all rights are reserved to the author. Copyright © 2015 by Judhaphan Padunchewit. Contact Judhaphan Padunchewit, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Graduate School of Language and Communication, 118 Serithai Road, Bangkok, Bangkok 10240, Thailand, email Judhaphan@gmail.com

Tourists were free to participate in the religious practices or join in dousing of the water if they wished. Apart from offering candles and flowers to the Buddha, visitors could watch the performances of Thai traditional music and buy special treats, craft souvenirs, or commemorative trinkets. Several organizations had collaborated to prepare for the celebration: the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), The Royal Navy Academy, The Community Club of Bangkok Yai District Supporters, the Fund Office of Health Development Promotion, and the Bangkok Yai District Office. The Songkran Festival temple fair was deemed a wonderful way to promote both tourism and a sense of reverence through fun. In 2013, as in earlier years, support from the local community Prok-Arun was a critical factor contributing to the success of the Songkran Water Festival. Thus, to the casual observer, all seemed harmonious and well, as had always been the case.

However, in the view of Phra Manus¹, the 50-year-old senior monk who served as boundary spanner between the Temple and the local community, things were not operating as smoothly as they appeared on the surface. In fact, there were, in Phra Manus' view, forces at play that were having an increasingly significant – and not always harmonious -- impact on the Temple, on the community, and on the relationship between the two. While working closely with the Temple management, Phra Manus had been pondering for some time the future of the Temple in the rapidly changing context of globalization.

In recent decades, the Temple as an institution had become more secularized, and the community more affected by the values of the modern world, including capitalism and tourism. To Phra Manus, it seemed that the future role of religion would increasingly become a changeful one. As such, it could bode well or bode ill for the Temple of Dawn, depending on the ability of Temple officials to manage the institution and its relationships with critical stakeholders. To this end, he led Temple management in devising Four Mandates to provide guidance concerning matters such as the relationship between religion and tourism, and religion and economic issues. To date, these had been only partially implemented.

Exhibit 1. Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn) ^{เพิ่มรูป}

Source: Wikipedia, 2011.

**Temple of Dawn and the Prok-Arun Community: A Symbiotic Relationship****The Temple of Dawn**

Sailing up the Chao Phraya River to a point where the river curves, one is rendered almost breathless by the sheer majesty of the sculptured stone stupa of the Temple of Dawn, whose 86-meter-high spire stands out in bold relief against the clear blue sky. The Temple of the Dawn (*Wat Arun Rajwararam*), was known throughout Thailand as one of the finest schools of Buddhism. During the present reign of King Rama IX, the Temple gained an even more prominent status by being officially designated, *Wat Arunrajawararam Rajaworamahavihara*, meaning The Great Royal Temple of Dawn.

As of 2013, there were 208 ecclesiastic and lay officials serving the Temple, including 99 monks (including the Abbot), 15 members of the management team of monks, 42 novices, 25 “temple boys” (who were raised by and served the Temple), and 42 officials. Despite the fact that the Temple of Dawn has been regulated by the Sangha Act under the centralized administration of the Sangha Council of Thailand, the Temple preserved its autonomy in managing its own

internal affairs. The management team of monks needed to learn how to organize the Temple to become a more flexible entity that could adapt strategically to environmental changes while maintaining harmonious relationship with the Prok-Arun Community.

The Prok-Arun Community

The culturally-rich Prok-Arun community had approximately 250 households, and historically had been comprised of four major ethnic groups: Traditional Thai, Thai-Mon, Thai-Muslim, and Thai-Chinese. At present, nearly 90 per cent of the residents were Buddhists, with Muslims comprising the remainder.

Historically, most Buddhist temples had been heavily involved in their local communities and played key roles in their economic, social and cultural development. In the social sense, Buddhism was inseparable from the idea of community in Thailand. The spiritual gathering and sharing created a moral community and gave worshipers a common identity through merit-making. Traditionally, householders and monks reciprocally performed the roles of givers and recipients. In addition to making donations to the temple, the people gave food to the monks, especially when they were out gathering alms. Being perceived as communal property, the temple would serve as a sort of general-purpose community center, in addition to a focal venue for the performance of various religious and spiritual functions. More broadly, the temple performed the role of the “giver” -- teaching religion and building and maintaining the community development networks in accordance with the Thai concept of *Boworn*.²

Khun Rungsi Ruamyoo, a senior member of the Culture Council Committee of the Bangkok Yai District,³ spoke at length about the functions of the temple and the “texture” of temple-community relationship in earlier times. Known as a free-thinking philosopher, Khun Rungsi had been born in Prok-Arun and knew well both the community and the Temple of Dawn. He reminisced as follows:

I was born here and I consider myself “Khon Kang Wat Kieng Wang” (the people who were born close to the Wat and the Palace). To me, Wat Arun used to be the familiar playground for kids and a recreational areas for families. I remember well

that children came to fly kites in the sky, playing hide and seek here ... a kind of fairyland for children. The temple here used to be where values, other than the frenetic speed of modern life, were prized, and where the peaceful simple life used to follow the rhythm of the seasons. It used to be where daily occupations remained under the quiet gaze of Buddha, where meditation, offerings and prayers were natural for Thai people from birth to death. All the hours of the day were turned towards the water of the Chao Phraya River and wisdom, as elements of happiness for the body and soul. The pervasiveness of religion justified our theological label 'immanence' here and in our country. The religious practices and manifestations were directed at achieving a palpable result here in this world. The monks ... ensured protection and auspicious continuity for both individuals and the community.

Adding to the description of the longstanding nature of the Prok-Arun Community and its relationship with the Temple of Dawn, 68-year-old Colonel Somchai Boonchan, the ex-Community Chairperson⁴ and the Vice Chair of the Culture Council stated:

I was born here in this community. Here, we all here lived peacefully and harmoniously. Here was, and is still, the community of charm and smiles. The natural elegance of land and water, where songs and dances alternate with indigenous flowers and plants, is the secret of the charm which for centuries the country of Siam and our community Prok-Arun has had the privilege of enjoying. The crux of the matter is respect for the hierarchical order of society. The Temple of Dawn has been very important to us for hundreds of years. We have worked every possible way to serve and cooperate with the temple for the betterment of the community and society as a whole.

Phra Manus explained that Thais demonstrated their quest for security by relying on the patronage of higher forces. Life was to be experienced as a whole, with Buddhism an indwelling, and the temples were an inseparable part of their surrounding communities. Religion was self-directed, and life in all its manifestations was suffused with a religious element. Importantly, the locus of religion was found to be in the individual and in intimacy with in-groups. Phra Manus continued:

Thai people are educated - in the family, in school, and to note, in the temple - to keep frustration inside. The value of Jai Yen is more a way of life, which is to keep one's temper whatever the situation. Instead of showing one's anger toward a problem or situation, Thai people illustrate Jai Yen, i.e., calm and patience. To show one's feeling to the others is not valued in Thai society. Respect of the other is highly valued. Especially in the community where everybody knows each other, conflicts are always solved with the help of elderly people in the community or monks...

Elaborating on the Phra Manus' comments, Khun Rungsi spoke to the essentiality of the Temple and the monks to the security and well-being of the community as a whole.

The monastery temple has been the center of life for the Thai people since ancient times. Their practice was ritualized by making merit and respecting the monkhood. In fact, the Buddhist monk is thought to be the ultimate agent to vanquish malevolent spirits. In a similar sense, a community may nurture auspiciousness and feel itself protected by the strength of merit accumulated in the community temples. The discipline of the monks, their chanting and preaching, the merit-making ceremonies and the power vested in the Buddha images -- all have been mingled and serve to increase the ambience of security, continuity, and auspiciousness in life. Above all, the power that is vested in merit and is continuously reinforced by the presence of monks and the performance of rituals. Here represents the strong relationship between Buddhism, Temple, and the Community.

Since ancient times the Buddhist temples in Thailand had played a significant role as a social, educational, and spiritual center for community members. The relationship between the Temple of Dawn and the Prok-Arun community was no exception.

21st Century Buddhist Tourism: Where Tourists Meet the Sacred

The rise of globalization and the increasing secularization of the world had the effect of making religious belief and practice increasingly complicated. There was occurring a profound re-shaping of the contours of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices. It was believed that contemporary Buddhist temples and their surrounding communities needed to adapt to the economic and social changes of modern societies – in particular, those forces propelling the rise of consumer culture as manifested in the dramatic increase in global tourism.

From its modest beginnings in the early 20th Century, the Thai travel and tourism industry had grown to become a major force in the Thai economy. By the year 2013, nearly 27 million international tourist arrivals (up nearly 19.5 % over 2012) were contributing an estimated 1,670 billion Thai Baht (about \$US 56 billion). With approximately two million Thais employed directly or indirectly in travel and tourism-related professions, tourism was proving to be a powerful creator of jobs across all sectors of the Thai economy. It was known that many

tourists around the world were attracted to the ‘oriental’ religious mysticism manifested in archaeological, historical, and cultural sites. This rising interest in cultural tourism, broadly defined, meshed well with the increasing public- and private-sector promotion of Buddhist Tourism.⁵

Exhibit 2. Foreign Tourists Visiting Thailand during 2012-2013

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2015

Origin	2013 No. Tourists (Millions)	2012 No. Tourists (Millions)
East Asia	16	12.5
Europe	6.3	5.6
America	1.1	1
South Asia	1.3	1.2
Oceania	1.02	1.04
Middle East	.62	.60
TOTAL	26.5	22.09

The Temple of Dawn, registered under royal patronage, was among the five best-known and most frequently visited temples in the Kingdom.⁶ It generated more than 14.5 million baht in revenues from selling 50-baht admission tickets (about US \$1.30) to foreign tourists. Apart from revenues generated by admission tickets, the Temple of Dawn also drew revenues from local and international tourists on pilgrimages, mostly Buddhist devotees participating in the Tourism Promotional Campaign, “Making-Merit through the Auspicious Routes by Visiting the Nine Temples.”⁷

Phramaha Kwan Tiramano, a member of the Temple’s Committee for Education who had a doctorate in Cultural Science from Mahasarakham University, revealed that revenues gained from tourism had enabled the temple to self-fund its classes, as well as administer temple affairs with little reliance on government funds. For many temples, paying the bills was a great concern, so tourists were seen as very welcome. Temple visitors ranged from the very pious to the purely secular. Because the revenues generated from tourism constituted such a significant contribution to the temple and the community, many in temple management viewed

temple tourism as a way to reduce poverty and raise the standard of living of the local community through increased jobs and income.

As Phra Manus explained:

It is true that tourism and religion are intertwined. Religion has acted as a powerful motive for travel since the time of early pilgrimages. The Temple of the Dawn, which is a temple with religious significance to the Buddhism devotees, has faced the fate of being commoditized in a sense. It was the effort to boost tourism that led to the commodification of the sacred place. However, it is also the commodification that has enhanced the appeal of the Temple as a heritage or cultural tourist attraction. Therefore, there is a need to see them as a whole instead of two separate entities.

In this same vein, Khun Vichai, the local shrine keeper, spoke positively of the overall impact of tourism on the Temple and the local community.

It is clear that generation of income and job opportunities have come from tourism. On Buddhist holy days, our temple will be crowded with people making merit and paying respect to Buddha Images -- and with tourists with diverse faith experiences. They come posing for photos, buying souvenirs, drinking coconut, visiting other attractions in the vicinity. The Wat Arun wharf upfront is always filled with tourists; both local and Asian. Some of them even donate money in our donation boxes.

On the negative side, however, promotion of the Temple as a tourist venue had precipitated an element of latent conflict between the local people and the Temple. The first source of conflict was grounded in community concerns about the commodification of religion that accompanied the Temple's ascendancy as a major site for tourism. The second source concerned the objections of religious and secular interests to the use of the territory surrounding the temple.

Concerning the first source of conflict, Khun Rungsri contended:

Now the Wat has created some new "frames." By reframing the positioning of the temple, from being purely engaged in religious matters in the old days to involving more business-like activities, the Wat has become more secularized. It could be said that this newly constructed identity of the Wat has essentially originated from the fact that the Temple of Dawn became one of the major tourist attractions along the Chao Phraya River. For me, identities must contend with underlying tensions between the traditional and the new versions of faith experiences as we, the local residents, struggle with the presence of tourists at our own place of worship. The role of the temple is not only to inculcate and educate people like in the old days,

but at present, in my opinion, the temple is just like the product endorsed by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. Commercialized or Capitalistic Buddhism -- if I labeled it right.

As temple tourism in general, and Temple of Dawn tourism in particular, had grown, the discomfort of some community residents over the use of the sacred to gain the pecuniary fruits of the profane (i.e., tourism) grew. When the number of temple tourists was much smaller, the issue was less acute. But as the number of tourists soared, some in the community – particularly, the older generation -- had come to feel that tourism was changing the religious experience for the worse. They were not alone in this belief, as some monks in the Temple had also voiced reservations concerning the increased emphasis on temple tourism as a revenue generator.

When Buddhism and Religious Tourism Collide

That tourism had resulted in both social and religious tension between the community and the Temple of Dawn was acknowledged on both sides of the issue. From the perspectives of some monks, the development and promotion of temple tourism threatened not only the sacred site and the peace of Buddhist devotees, but also the very meaning of sacredness of the religion itself. Phra Manus explained:

Capitalism intensified the shift away from the original operative principle of goodness in Buddhism and onto money. In the modern world, Capitalism has intensified the shift from understanding merit-making as goodness to merit-making in terms of money; increasingly donors give money or food purchased with baht. In many towns, monks queue up at dawn before market stalls where ready-made food offerings are for sale. However, tourism could bring a positive side. Here at the Temple of Dawn, we have several fund-raising programs -- e.g., the Fund for Restoration of Painting at Door-Window Panels, the Fund for Scholarship under King Rama the Second, the Fund for King Taksin's Scholarship, the Fund for the Treatment of Sick Monks and Novices. And it is clear that tourists are part of the support for these funds. But should the tourism be considered the culprit of commodification in culture and traditions? I speculate that the answer is not so clear, as the entire world has become more secularized.

There was concern that with the promotion of temple tourism, the sacredness of the religion might be shunned. Traditionally, Buddhist worship was a means of bringing bring peace to the mind of the devotee. For example, ordination was the ceremony marking entry into the adult world of responsibilities.⁸ As one of the major rituals in Buddhism, it was often construed as a good indicator of a worshiper's faith. Yet in recent years, fewer and fewer Thai Buddhist men came to ordination. It was a particular matter of concern that fewer local male residents were being ordained at the Temple of Dawn. Phra Manus wondered to himself whether the decline in ordinations at the Temple was an artifact of the ways that religious faith was changing in the modern era.

Colonel Somchai Boonchan, the Vice Chair of the Culture Council pointed out that:

We don't want this to happen to the Temple of Dawn. It's happened at other temples around here that some monks need to buy food for themselves because no one offers them food any longer. This is very sad. We are faced with a faith crisis.

Thus, there was some disquiet over the prospect that the influx of tourists would precipitate the gradual loss of the religious identity of the Temple of the Dawn, as well as a gradual erosion of local culture and identity. Khun Vichai spoke to the reaction of some members of the community when he declared:

Some local residents, especially members of the old generation, were not happy with the "New Year Count Down at Temple of Dawn" despite the fact that the justification for holding . . . the event was right and the effort was driven by religious purposes. The new generation of tourists just came to the celebration for fun alone.

A more detailed elaboration on the several facets of the disquiet and concern over temple tourism was articulated by Khun Rungsri, who stated:

The old generations and ways of life are gone. ... There is gap here—the new generation does not give significance to the temple the way their ancestors used to. Visiting the Wat, one should be enlightened. It is wisdom you need to get from coming to the Temple. But now, people come to the Wat for other purposes, not for spiritual development. People are lured by something else, which is not Buddhism.

... In times past, the connection between Thai life and the temple was very close. We used to live very harmoniously, no conflict, with social and economic unity. When we got sick, the monk would visit us at our place. In the old days, the monks visited us. ... Time has changed and so has the role of the monks. Sometimes

when we perform a Buddhist ritual at our houses, truth is, we have to invite monks from other adjacent areas.... Today, the monks continue these traditions but in an ever changing way. Many monks now possess teaching certificates and computers. Even among Thais visiting the temple, there are those who have become tourists themselves and dilettantes in their own culture.

Temple-Community Conflict over Territory

Temple tourism had led management to making the Temple a distinctive place; articulating the particular identity of the Temple, and constructing aesthetically pleasing experiences for tourists. Specifically, to draw more tourists to the temple, facilities at the Temple of Dawn were undergoing construction or improvement. These included transport systems, landscaping inside the temple, restaurants, kiosks, signage in English, etc. An example of an infrastructure development that had both positive and negative outcomes was the new road that had been cut through the Prok-Arun community, dividing the community from the temple.

Providing tourists with another convenient transportation route to the Temple (apart from the motor boats plying the Chao Phraya River) facilitated tourism and increased tourist revenue. Benefits accrued to local residents, also, as they could make use of the facilities alongside the tourists.

It was, however, in the matters of land, boundaries, space, and territory that efforts to promote increased tourism ultimately produced conflict and misunderstanding over scarce resources. These issues had their origins in the allocation of land inside the Temple among various entities, the prohibition against monks being engaged in any kind of pecuniary enterprise, and the perception of who was behind the plan to expand the parking lot for Temple visitors (an act that could result in the dislocation of some local residents).

Division of Land inside the Temple Compound

The Temple's land was proportionately divided into three major areas: (1) the Region of Buddhavas; (2) the Region of Sanghavas; and (3) the renting zone for local vendors both inside

the Temple and in the wharf area adjacent to the Chao Phraya River. The first two zones of lands were reserved for Buddhist affairs, and the latter for the commoners, i.e., the local people. Some areas of the land of the Prok-Arun community had also been classified under this type of arrangement, and some people rented land from the Temple.

Phramaha Kwan Tirmano explained that there were 35 local vendors who rented the Temple land close to the Royal Navy. Most of these vendors were people from the Prok-Arun community who were endeavoring to earn income by selling souvenirs, food and beverages, woodcrafts, and jewelry to tourists.

The Necessary Role of Middlemen

Because the monks and the Sangha bodies could not directly deal with worldly business matters,⁹ all the monetary contracts had to be done by a *vitaya vajakorn* (i.e., middleman) appointed by the Temple Abbot. The *vitaya vajakorn* was required to be a lay Thai Buddhist male at least 25 years old, in good financial status, with no insurmountable debts and no official record of any legal offenses. Over the years, the middlemen had played important roles in enhancing the development, and in managing the businesses, of the Temple. However, their very centrality to decision-making processes involving matters of business and money occasionally placed them in the front line of tension between the Temple and the community.

Tensions over Territory

Given their involvement in the allocation of resources with which to promote tourism, as well as their involvement in the dispensation of revenues generated by tourism, the *vitaya vajakorn* were viewed by many in the community as controlling – at least partially -- temple tourism. Thus, when word reached the Prok-Arun community that the Temple intended to expand the parking lots in order to accommodate more tourists, disputes arose over the use of the territory. The conflict was fueled largely by residents' fears that expanding the parking lots would necessarily require some of them to relocate to live elsewhere. According to Khun Vichai, a Temple guards who took care of the Ordination Hall, it was largely because of the

possibility that they might be blamed for such relocation that the middlemen were “not likely to identify themselves as *vitaya vajakorn* openly to the public.”

Khun Siridej, a middleman, remained supportive of increased tourism. The impeccably attired owner of a gem shop noted:

We should build more roads for tourists. Now the road to the Temple of Dawn is too narrow. Only minivans are able to enter the Wat, not coach buses. We need more tourists. This will bring prosperity to the Wat and the community as a whole. People earn more money, which of course makes them happier and self-sufficient.

Commenting on the conflict between the community and the Temple, Phra Manus pronounced:

In general, when it comes to conflict, Thai people may want to mask their feelings. They show no exterior sign that they are angry, they keep it inside. But they can show it in subtle ways. By refusing or avoiding a direct confrontation with the person. Ku na is the concept of saving face. Open and direct criticism is not valued in Thai society. But we have known there are some latent conflicts going on here between the local people here and the Temple for many years already over the space issue. But no one would like to explicitly bring up the issue.

As the temple-community angst over territory prevailed, the monk management team of the Temple approved an initiative to restore faith, trust and credibility back. The initiative was called the Faith Reconfiguration through Strategic Communication.

Faith Reconfiguration through Strategic Communication

In the opinion of Phra Manus, the current situation at the Temple of Dawn warranted a well-considered strategy to win the hearts and support of all the Temple’s stakeholders. As a religious organization, the Temple needed to build full awareness of the new roles of the Temple concerning the complex issues relating to the effects of the intersections of religion and tourism, and religion and economic issues. Elaborating on the point, Phra Manus stated:

If one is to understand the ongoing interaction between social change and religious adaptation, one has to identify how this encounter is situated within the local community as well as a part of broader global networks. The Temple of Dawn needs to come to understand that the Prok-Arun, the community in which the Temple serves as social center and moral beacon, is no longer a physical being, defined by

proximity and the shared interests of a common location. Today's community is a transient, invisible entity in which the shape and conditions of interaction are easily broken if the temple does not communicate with the local residents in more strategic ways. The conventional frame of reference has been challenged or even undermined.

... The Temple needs to come up with more strategic ways to boost local tourism; concurrently with more open communication with the people of the Prok-Arun community, as well as to create new alliances between the Temple and the surrounding community by engaging fully the realities of an increasingly secular world.

Phramaha Kwan Tiramano's investigation of the Temple's economic, social, and cultural roles that affected people's faith¹⁰ shed additional light on the matter. He concluded that temple officials had to attempt to reconfigure their religious enterprise to align with, rather than resist, the global forces of modernity. At the same time, every effort had to be made to preserve the strength and significance of the Temple of Dawn as a source of inspiration, healing, advice, and blessing, and as a major Buddhist institution.

As they continued to reflect on the matter, the monk management team of the Temple agreed that it was critical that the Temple make a concerted effort to help the community regain and strengthen its faith. Out of this conviction grew the development of the "Four Mandates of the Temple of Dawn," as a starting point for the faith reconfiguration.¹¹ The Mandates were communicated to the monks and the laypersons serving the Temple of Dawn at every level. The four Mandates were: 1) Develop a Vision of the Temple's Role in Faith Reconfiguration; 2) Emphasize the Temple's Mission in Creating and Maintaining Strong Humanism Programs; 3) Strategically Expand the Temple's Network through Participatory Approaches Involving all Stakeholders; and, 4) Strategically Position the Temple as the Major Institution in the Community.

Strategic Communication for the Execution of the Four Mandates

(1) Develop a Vision of the Temple's Role in Faith Reconfiguration. There was widespread agreement among Temple officials that the starting point for the process of faith reconfiguration was the Temple's own monks. The Temple needed to reconfigure faith among its own people before undertaking such a reconfiguration effort between the Temple and the

community. To this end, it would be important that monks accept the philosophy of *diversity* or *pluralism* which was strongly influenced by science and consumerism. Indeed, in the touristic era of the early 21st century, acceptance of the premise that no single religious faith had a monopoly on “truth” was the *sine qua non* of tolerance.

A related aspect of diversity was the sense of *individualism* to which the Temple would need to be open. A key characteristic of the modern era was the strong desire by both local people and foreign tourists to preserve what they felt were essential values, and their own notions of morality, lifestyle, taste, and worldview. Faith reconfiguration would require the monks’ appreciation of the dual discourse between the religious and the secular, the traditional and the modern. Temple officials and all the monks would also have to realize the importance of aesthetics to today’s tourists.

According to Phramaha Kwan, the faith reconfiguration model represented a conceptual shift in how the monks saw their roles in the community and society. Specifically, their roles would need to shift towards becoming researchers and educators. It seemed to Phra Manus that a growing number of monks at the Temple of Dawn were attempting to move in this direction. He explained:

There has been institutional inertia elsewhere that seeks to avoid change and preserve the status quo. I think that there is an important conceptual shift in how monks see their roles in and duties to society. We need to learn that things keep changing, as Buddhist teachings have always emphasized impermanence as a defining feature of reality. We need to become fully aware of the fact that . . . contemporary men are intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically different from their predecessors a generation or two earlier. They, as well as society as a whole, are ongoing experiments in whether the speed, intensity, and pressures of globalization are sustainable. This new paradigm has confronted us, the traditional Buddhist institution, at every turn. If the Temple does not accelerate institutional change and innovative policies to accommodate the attitudes and lifestyles of the new era . . . it will become a captive of our own faith, philosophical indoctrination, or our own religious fundamentalism.

Therefore, Phramaha Kwan concluded, co-existence of secular and religious values would need to be practically endorsed.

(2) Emphasize the Temple's Mission in Creating and Maintaining Strong Religious Humanism Programs. The Temple would need to strengthen its positioning through continuous promotion of "Religious Humanism Programs." The Temple needed to be seen as a center for personal empowerment, based on both religious doctrine and humanistic concerns for social welfare. Phramaha Kwan contended that the Temple had to adopt strategies to increase *social relevance*. This would entail demonstrating to the community and society how religion could have significance for their lives.

Certain outreach programs had been conducted by the Temple of Dawn for varying periods of time. However, in Phramaha Kwan's view, the Temple needed to upgrade the significance and impact of these outreach programs until they were of such a stature as to secure the Temple's worldwide reputation as a "place of significance for Religious Humanism Programs." This meant increasing the visibility of the programs and making them more strategic. The conceptual significance of "Religious Humanism" would also need to be promoted on a wide scale in order to strengthen the Temple's position as a center for Buddha Dhamma Practice, Education, and Humanitarian and Charitable projects. More innovative programs would be needed.

(3) Strategically Expand the Temple's Network through Participatory Approaches Involving all Stakeholders. Temple officials needed to plan and implement new initiatives for re-aligning their traditions to accommodate incremental yet significant changes in religious worldviews, demographics, urbanization, and tourist culture. Without an adequate plan, the Temple would incur the risk of tourism damaging both the sites and the heritage, in addition to adversely affecting the relationships with the community. It was therefore critical that the voices of all stakeholders – Temple officials and monks, community residents, etc. – be heard. Further, the roles and expectations of all stakeholders would have to be considered in order to co-manage the religious site. In this regard, it was important that the co-existence of secular and religious values be valued by all concerned. Activities aimed at the preservation, restoration,

management, enhancement, and promotion of temple tourism within the auspicious framework of the faith reconfiguration needed to be coordinated.

In order to minimize misunderstanding and conflict as the faith reconfiguration process unfolded, the Temple resolved to endeavor to make it clear to all stakeholders that its overall intent was to nurture positive change that improved the quality of life for all involved. In bringing about such positive change, innovative initiatives integrating the ecclesiastic world, economy and culture would need to be developed and carried out. In dealing with issues that had been perceived as being conflictual -- e.g., the issues concerning the use of space and the plan to build parking lots -- the Temple would necessarily have to aim for full disclosure concerning all infrastructural expansion plans and possibilities, while also striving to avoid negatively affecting the lives of the people living there.

(4) Strategically Position the Temple as the Major Institution in the Community. Central to the realization of this mandate would be reformulating the Temple's mission (which now emphasized "learning and healing") to embrace socio-cultural functions as well. Phra Manus spoke to this issue:

Right now, the Temple of Dawn holds dual roles as a center for Buddhism Development and a center for local urban community development. The Temple has pioneered some of the key concepts and institutional strategies that guide our agenda for the future. We sponsored a diverse range of activities, only some of which are related to Buddhist themes. We believe that the role of the Temple is to bring people together because of mutual interests or shared concerns rather than just the ritual occasions connected with the basic funeral services and other ceremonies.

In conjunction with the Community Network Committee, the Temple had devised a public relations scheme with which to manage the relationship with the Prok-Arun Community. The following programs were proposed to be implemented, with the objective of promoting a harmonious relationship with the community and society as a whole: (1) Development of a more open and faster line of communication; (2) Cooperation with the community, preservation of the Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts of both the local community and the

Temple. Additionally, programs concerning traditional careers would be administered (e.g., Traditional Thai Food and Desserts, Flower Making Crafts, etc.); (3) Cooperation with the local Police Department, and management of traffic for the use of public space and footpaths within and around the Temple. More parking lots would be built for tourists, but only after communication with local residents to ensure that the lots would not come at their expense; (4) Enhancement of the Tourism Network Collaboration Programs. Programs like tour guide training would be provided for monks and local residents interested in becoming professional tour guides for the Temple. This would generate more income for the local people and at the same time help maintain the Cultural Heritage; and (5) Creation of a Historical-Cultural Preservation Center at the Temple, with the Temple administering knowledge management in the form of a library for people in the community.

Through strategic communication based on the audience-centered participatory approaches, the scheme of faith reconfiguration had thus far received positive feedback.

The Reformulated Roles of Temple of the Dawn in the World of Globalization

Thus it was that the Temple of Dawn, through articulation of the “Four Mandates,” reaffirmed that in the ever-evolving globalized world, its most important role was that of bringing people together because of mutual interests rather than attending to people during the ritual occasions that the monks performed. The Faith model, with the emphasis on strategic communication and sustainable development based on participation of all stakeholders, would guide management of the Temple.

Underlying all would be acceptance of the primacy of the Temple’s developmental roles. As Phra Methiratanadilok, the Assistant Abbot, stated, the Temple of Dawn should proceed through strategic communication as a role model place of Buddha Dhamma Practice with educational and humanitarian charitable projects. The vision and mission of the Temple must be kept in place: to provide a community for homage, education, shelter, and consultation; to

provide a place for learning for under-privileged Thai teenagers where they could obtain an education that guaranteed them employment; to help all those who were suffering by providing a place to practice Vipassana or Meditation and the teachings of the Buddha regardless of their backgrounds; and to provide formal Buddhist training for all monks from all over the Kingdom.

Given that the transition to a reconfigured faith, and all that would accompany it, was still very much a work in progress, neither Phra Manus nor other members of Temple management could be certain of the Temple's ultimate success in implementing the Four Mandates or of the efficacy of the Mandates in addressing the concerns of all of its stakeholders. All were hopeful, however, that at the time of the next Songkran Water Festival, any conflict would have long since been vanquished, thus permitting local worshipers and local and foreign tourists to pursue their acts devotion, followed by *sanuk*, or having fun as they so wished. Meanwhile, assured Phra Methiratanadilok,

All beings from every background, nationality, and religion are all welcome to come and see us at the Temple of Dawn, to be involved in our projects, practice Meditation or Vipassana or simply just visit.



Judhaphan Padunchewit is a senior lecturer in Organizational Communication at the Graduate School of Applied Statistics, for the Logistics Management Program, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand. She earned a Bachelor Degree of Arts from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, a Master Degree in Communication from Pittsburg State University, USA; and Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication from the joint Ph.D. Program from Bangkok University, Thailand in cooperation with Ohio University, USA.

Her research specializes in communication in general and strategic organizational communication, negotiation, and intercultural communication in particular. She is also Director to various public training programs in Strategic Communication for NIDA Training Center. She also serves on the Committee for Sufficiency Economy at NIDA.

References

- Allen, B. J. (1995). Diversity and organizational communication. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 23(2), 143-155.
- Conrad, C., & Poole, M. S. (2002). *Strategic organizational communication in a global economy* (5th Ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.
- FICCI. (2012). *Diverse beliefs: Tourism of faith, religious tourism gains ground*. Retrieved on June, 2014 from www.religioustourism@ficci.com.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B, Vercic, D., & Siramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1), 3-35.
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports. (2013). Comparative statistics for foreign tourist visitors to Thailand during 2012-13. Retrieved on October 3rd, 2014 from www.thansethakij.com.
- Schein, E. H. (1997). Organizational Culture and Leadership. www.tnellen.com/tc/schein.html.

Endnotes

1. Phra Manus Kaochaorng received his Certificate of Dhamma Course (High Level) in 2007 and his Bachelor of Arts (Second Class Honors) in 2009 from Mahachulalongkorn Rajawidyalai University, Thailand and currently pursued his Master in Language and Communication at National Institute of Development Administration. He has been Official Examiner of Dhamma and Teacher of Buddhist Sunday School Course at the Temple of Dawn. He was also Chief Organizer of Samanera Ordination for the Summertime Ordination Project of Samanera 2010 held by Bangkok Metropolitan Administration in cooperation with the Temple of Dawn. His special skills have been extended to various areas; e.g., Radio Program Moderator of Buddhist Radio Station, Guest Speaker of TV Program at Buddhist TV Station, Buddhist Teacher of Bangkok Yai Primary and Secondary School. He also serves as special lecturer on various Topics concerning Dhamma Talks. His life objective is to identify himself as Thai Buddhist monk interested in Dhamma Propagation to the worldly society. Contact: Bikkhu@ovi.com
2. The alphabet 'B' equates to 'Ban' or the Family, the 'W' equates to Wat or the temple, and the 'R' equates to "Rongrien" or the school.
3. The Bangkok Yai District was one of 50 districts of Bangkok, Thailand. The district is sub-divided into 2 sub-districts: Wat Arun and Wat Tha Phra. Bangkok Yai has a long history since it was the site of Thon Buri, the former capital of Thailand during 1767-1782. There were 13 temples in Bangkok Yai and the Temple of Dawn was the only chief Temple categorized as royal wat first class. The Bangkok Yai District Office performed a number of social, cultural and civic functions, largely through a series of committees staffed mostly by residents of the particular local community. The Office has worked closely with the Temple of Dawn in launching several programs and projects concerning socio-cultural preservation and promotion and temple tourism under the theme "Local Culture Learning, Visiting ancient museums and cultivating the appreciation for temple and palace tourism". Check teelek801@hotmail.com for more information.
4. In Prok-Arun, local governance is conducted by a 12-member body nominated and elected by the community members and appointed by the Bangkok Yai District Office under the auspices of the Committee of Temple of Dawn. This body is charged with managing and supervising all internal affairs of the community; ensuring the well-being of the community in every aspect; and also with coordinating with other stakeholders in running the community economy.

5. The temple was a sacred place of supreme significance to the Thai Buddhist. Every community had at least one. As of 2002, there were 32,000 monasteries, 265,956 monks, and 87,695 novices in the Kingdom of Thailand.
6. The other four were the Emerald Buddha Temple, Wat Pho, Wat Suthat, and Wat Benjamaborphit.
7. This campaign was supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand in cooperation with various temples and the private tour operators. An example of the private tour operators that the Temple of Dawn authorized in the management of such tourism campaign was Saphana Nakorn Co., Ltd. The event was managed on the cruise liner with buffet and professional tour guides who were television hosts to entertain the guests on board. Talisman from renowned monks was given to the local tourists making these merit making trips on the Chao Phraya River as tokens of appreciation and souvenirs of respect.
8. Traditionally, most Thai men entered the monkhood (*buat phra*) at some point in their lives. Symbolically, the motive or purpose of ordination was to acquire a deeper knowledge of Buddhist teachings (through study, self-deprivation and meditation), to progress along the path to enlightenment, and to bring merit to one's parents.
9. Per Rules of Sangha Council of Thailand, the 18th Issuance of 1983.
10. Faith is described as sets of beliefs which are based on wisdom and logic that people in community hold onto. The "Four Mandates of the Temple of Dawn originated from the initiatives proposed by Phramaha Kwan Tiramano, the key member of the Temple's Committee supervising the Educational Section, along with other key members who gathered informally for several rounds during 2009-2010 discussing the changing face of the modern world, temple tourism and its impact on the roles of the Temple of Dawn. Inspired by his Ph.D. dissertation, Phramaha Kwan became pioneer in forming alliances with other key Committee members in the brainstorming discussion and study of the future of the Temple and the necessity to reconfigure the faith. The ideas involving the Four Mandates had been proposed to the Temple and had been endorsed by the Temple Committees. Being launched in 2010, the Four Mandates had become the Code of Conducts for Temple management and laypersons.
11. Examples of the **Buddhist Dharma Education and Practice** programs included moral and ethical development; the Buddhist Preaching Programs; Summer Camps for Novice Ordination; Dharma and Meditation Practices Projects in cooperation with the Royal Navy; Buddhism Learning Center for children and youth, the Pali Language Teaching Course; Tutoring in Abhidhamma for the monks; and, Funding for Dharma Education. Examples of the **Humanitarian and Charitable** projects included the public services systems for disadvantaged people; the Center for Buddha and Dharma Practice; and, and International charity (e.g., helping the poor, the needy, and underprivileged students, the *pro bono* meditation class, and practices for peace and happiness in daily life); the Community Learning Center (C.L.C.) for Development of Humanity; and, the Moral Development programs. Examples of the **Social and Educational Welfare Development** programs included the Alumni Club for Wat Arun Alumni; Funds and Scholarships for Children and Offspring of the Temple Officials; Community Educational Development programs; the establishment of the Janet Stowe and Walter Stowe Foundation for contributions for the support of poor, needy and under-privileged children; and Temple Tour Guide Programs.