

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

In the Chapter II, Chapter III and Chapter IV, the researcher studied the rise and success of Dhammakāya Temple, surveyed and evaluated the factors of success of Dhammakāya Temple. The followings are providing the significant points of the three chapters in brief.

##### **5.1.1 The Uniqueness of Dhammakāya Meditation Technique: the Key Factor for the Success and Popularity of Dhammakāya Temple**

The easy-to-do and trendy-to-try characteristics of Dhammakāya Meditation System makes the Technique appeal and relevant to well-educated middle-class lifestyle as well as make it standing apart from the traditional Thai Theravāda meditation but still being able to well co-exist with the mainstream Buddhist belief. Dhammakāya Temple offers Dhammakāya Meditation to all; no rejection to any faiths as the Temple views that the common feature of every meditation practice including Dhammakāya Meditation System focuses on the process of stilling the mind; race and faith play no obstruction.

Dhammakāya Meditation Technique is labelled novel by other current Buddhists including media and critics; on the other hand its modern outlook charms people to try it as being considered as something brand-new in the spiritual dimension and viewing it can offer neo-effective solution to answer the need of their modern hectic life-problems or the least tag some extent of spiritual-value-added quality into their lives.

In couple with the efficiently out-of-the-box propagating method to spread the message to target group and ensuring their full understanding, Dhammakāya Meditation is quickly accepted by the general public at the same time rapidly becoming highly popular. With the passing of time, more and more testimonies prove the positive effects to the life of Dhammakāya Meditators; consequently, Dhammakāya Meditation alongside with Thai Buddhism regains the ground in Thailand's major Buddhist society.

Danna Marie Cook in her thesis<sup>146</sup> has this to say about the emergence and the high profile of Dhammakāya Meditation Teaching in the Thai society as: '... It became increasingly difficult for the Thai monastic elite to make arguments against

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<sup>146</sup> Danna Marie Cook, op.cit., p.61

Dhammakāya grounded in the claim that it was a deviant form of Buddhism contaminating the Buddha's teachings and likely to cause the decline of Buddhism, when for all intents and purpose the Dhammakāya movement visibly seemed to be causing a resurgence of Buddhist practice reengineering the Buddhist sentiment among many Thai, especially in the middle class.'

### 5.1.2 Dhammakāya Meditation's Contributions and Roles: Another Key Factor of the Temple's Success

#### 1. The Contribution and the Roles in Addressing Social Psychic Deprivation

Dhammakāya Meditation has religiously contributed to the Thai modern society to the great extent because Dhammakāya Temple can effectively utilize Dhammakāya Meditation to answer to the spiritual lack of the present Thai Buddhists. Psychic deprivation is the intent problem in the metro economy-based society in every country, Thailand is no exception. This social mental crisis in the opposite light serves as a strength and opportunity for the Temple to offer Dhammakāya Meditation as practicable alternative to alleviate social psychic deprivation because its system's outlook is seen by Thai urbanists as something relevant and reliable.

#### 2. The Contribution and the Roles in Thaumaturgical Aspect –Giving the Sense of Appeal

The quick deliverance of a sense of mental and physical well-being helping Dhammakāya Meditators avert their worldly problems, makes Dhammakāya Meditation appears attractive and is quickly embraced by the practitioners. The sense of appeal in Dhammakāya Meditation well addresses to the thaumaturgical aspect when people seeking the teaching which provides them with the life solution and career achievement. Once people in the thaumaturgical situation experience the meditative effects, they are willing to spend time engaging in meditation practice. As a result, Dhammakāya Meditation charms the practitioner with the practice and the Temple. Thus Thaumaturgical Aspect translates into the continuing practice of Dhammakāya Meditation and the building of a strong Dhammakāya Meditator community (glum kalayānamittara).

#### 3. The Contribution and the Roles in Conversionist Element –Giving the Sense of Confidence

Although Dhammakāya Temple utilizes Dhammakāya Meditation as the mechanism of attracting people, the Temple does not emphasize on conversing people's faith; the Conversionist element featured by Dhammakāya Meditation Technique here refers to behavior conversion. The first-hand experience of the change of behaviors for the better; in some cases even going as far the level as the complete transformation of self, produces a sense of confidence in the practitioners that Dhammakāya Meditation can help them attain personal achievement in the way they like, and the confidence that Dhammakāya Meditation is efficient enough to generate world peace for humankind keep the Temple's followers attach to the Tradition and help pushing the practice into their own communities, as people like seeking a supernatural transformation of his/her self to change their own society. Thus Conversionist Element held a sense of confidence make Dhammakāya Meditation benefit both at individual level and at social scope.

#### 4. The Contribution and the Roles in World-affirming View –Unlock ‘Hidden Potentials and Affirm to the World

As the Temple’s world view to affirm to the world, they happily model themselves in various beneficial aspects of the world and make the best use of them for the Temple’s religious benefits such as utilizing the internet and satellite technologies to create a national and international community for those specific time of meditation which turning out to offer the Temple a competitive edge to greatly contribute to the modern society comparing to other religious movements in the contemporary.

By offering the sense of refreshing and renewed vigor, Dhammakāya Meditation is seen as possessing the quality to enable people to unlock their ‘hidden’ physical, mental, and spiritual potential which contributing to individual admirable changes while still affirming to the world

#### 5. The Contribution and the Roles in Buddhist Modernism -Member Network Quickening its Evangelism

One remarkable advantage of Dhammakāya Temple arranging Dhammakāya Meditation practice in groups offers apart from individual benefits, it helps in building the member networking system (glum kalayānamittra), and reviving the sense of religious interest in wide scope. This established member network ensures Dhammakāya Temple and the Tradition surrounding it will continue for a long time in the future because the system can propel the task by itself. And this sort of member networking system is seen as a modernization in Buddhism as it has never before happened in Theravāda Buddhism.

#### 6. The Contribution and the Roles in the Revival of Meditation –the Strong Focus on Dhammakāya Meditation Propagation

The pro-active plan in Dhammakāya Meditation propagation, the encouragement of earnest pursuit of meditation in daily life and the determination to unify different Buddhist fraternities have sent the accumulated number of Dhammakāya meditators reach 60,000 and as long as meditation remains being practiced enthusiastically by Buddhists, Buddhism will continue to thrive and a morality-dominant society can be hoped to be real. This is to confirm the success in Revival of Buddhist meditation of Dhammakāya Temple.

In conclusion, Dhammakāya Meditation Technique responds to its practitioners’ needs in various dimensions: Psychic deprivation, Thaumaturgical aspect –offering the sense of attraction, Conversionist element –giving the sense of confidence, World affirming –unfold hidden potentials while affirming to the world, Buddhist modernism –Member network, and the Revival of Meditation practice –Strong focus on propagation.

Dhammakāya Temple dominates in the field of Dhammakāya Meditation dissemination in the present time. All the Temple’s efforts are concentrated on Dhammakāya Meditation teaching even though from the eyes of the public side, viewing the Temple indulging in organizing grand-scale ceremonies as being covetous for fame. In the close look into how much recognition Dhammakāya Temple has received revealing one hidden extraordinary common strategy which is overlooked by others but

contributes greatly to the Temple's success; it is simply that Dhammakāya Temple does the old things in the new way.

Religious ceremonies at Dhammakāya Temple, in stead of being an entertainment festival gathering like other traditional temples, is the strategic mechanism to draw people to the Temple and inevitably led to try a session of Dhammakāya Meditation. In the important occasions, ceremonies must be held at the site of Dhammakāya Cetiya as the venue offering the sacred atmosphere and makes it easy for the Temple to present the visitors with the practice of meditation. People like to meditate once they learn that it is easy to do and the practice is universal.

Buddhism is actually a universal science befitting the modern scientific world. Meditation is the tangible testimony for this claim because once it is practiced; it produces result in measure of the effort regardless of time and race. Dhammakāya Temple successfully conveys the message that Dhammakāya Meditation is relevant to the life of people in the present era inferring that Buddhism is also relevant to the present world. This is the most significance of both Dhammakāya Temple and Dhammakāya Meditation toward Buddhism.

Phibul Choompolpaisal in the interview of Donald Swearer for his thesis<sup>147</sup>, views Dhammakāya Temple in relation with Buddhism as '... when Swearer perceives the Dhammakāya movement to be 'nationalistic' and 'universalistic' and the Stupa to be a 'universal' expression of Buddhism (see Donald K. Swearer's answer to question 6 in appendix B) the Dhammakāya movement is seen as benefiting both Thailand as the nation and religious practitioners.'

Donald Swearer's full answer to question no. 6 is as follows:

I have written about Wat Phra Dhammakāya in an essay on 'fundamentalistic' movement in Theravāda Buddhism. It shares several characteristics of modern religious movements with it's emphasis on 'this worldly' activities, a simple method of practice, and a simple creed or doctrine. It can be considered a 'reform' or 'revitalization' movement in its efforts to establish a vital national center with satellites throughout Thailand and in other countries. Symbolically, e.g. architecture, Buddha image, Phra chedi as well as doctrinally and in practice it is striving for a universal expression of Buddhism. In this regard, the movement is both nationalistic but also universalistic.

This thesis is primarily to seek the understanding through the in-depth analysis of the emergence of Dhammakāya Temple in the time of Thailand's social change and economic transmission and its successful propagation of Dhammakāya Meditation by the focus on tech and target to smoothly blend the practice in with the urban middle class lifestyle. This thesis reveals obvious reforms and innovations in Dhammakāya Temple, which help their propagation, evangelism and establishment of member network (*glum kalayānamittara*). Hopefully all these can benefit scholars and other new religious movements to understand on how to navigate their own tradition without compromising the core values.

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<sup>147</sup> Phibul Choompolpaisal, op.cit., p.33

This thesis also suggests that the continuing success of Dhammakāya Temple alongside with its unique Dhammakāya Meditation indicates the necessity of the traditional Dhamma teaching reform in order to enable to catch up with the desire of Buddhist solutions for the contemporary Buddhist laities. Meanwhile the increasing Dhammakāya Meditation members at a consistently high rate highlight the intense psychic deprivation and deduce the high demand of spiritual refuge in the present Thai society.

Dhammakāya Temple at some point is described as one of the Theravāda-derived sects by scholars. The reactions and attitudes toward the Temple at some extents tend to be negative and emotional rather than constructive and academic. But the Temple's major contributions and innovative development in contemporary Thai society suggests that when studying Thai religious, one should be attentive to the alternative world views encompassed by the religious movements and to the outreach for member recruitment strategies they employ. This would lead to a more satisfactory understanding of the contemporary Thai religious situation.

However, it is obvious that some problems have impeded the study of new religious movement in Thailand, such as: the Thai scholar's preoccupation with doctrinal and philosophical dimensions of Theravāda Buddhism often neglects the social milieu of religious movements. Despite a large literature on new religious movements in Thailand and elsewhere, e.g. the works of S.J Tambiah and Donald K. Swearer (S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and Donald K. Swearer, 'Fundamentalistic Movements in Theravāda Buddhism' in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) pp. 628-690), very few Thai scholars have academic interest in new religious group in Thai society. This vacuum should be filled and this thesis attempts to fill of the vacuum.

This thesis also reflects various standpoint of view both pro- and con- toward Dhammakāya Temple and Dhammakāya Meditation in various dimensions lending comprehension to each specific characteristics in attempt to redress injustice caused by misinterpretation, mis-transferring of information and pre-occupied frame view; aiming to urge the future engagement of constructive dialogue in order to access mutual authentic understanding.

Meanwhile the pro- and con- debate reveals that Dhammakāya Temple in spite of their highly admiring success of public Dhamma propagation necessitates the reconstruction of their public communication capacity and the reinvention of their public relation savvy in term of building correct Temple image and bettering public knowledge toward the Temple.

To conclude the factors of success of Dhammakāya Temple in convergence with the term definition in short and simple dialogue as:

Dhammakāya Temple succeeds in utilizing Dhammakāya Meditation as a mechanism efficiently to attract followers in limitless scope and consistent fashion.

Dhammakāya Temple succeeds in utilizing Dhammakāya Meditation as a magnet capable to keep the followers attaching to the community (Dhammakāya

network -glum kalayānamittara) and energize the Temple's members to scale up the Tradition's accomplishment.

## **5.2 The Suggested Areas for Further Research**

This thesis contributes to the area of religion studies especially in term of taking the consideration of meditation teaching and religious reform for the further research in the comparison with other distinguish religious movements.

The in-depth studies of the eighteen serial bodies phenomena described in the model of Dhammakāya Meditation, particularly taking a close examination in the relation between the ability to the mental defilements diminution and the manifestation of each inner body. In this thesis, the manifestations have been touched upon superficially for fearing that wide-ranged elaboration would inessentially cause deviation from the original objectives intent on academic discussion and constructive dialogue and fail to render the complete understanding according to the objectives of this thesis.

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2535 B.E. - 2540 B.E. (1992 - 1997)

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2540 B.E. - 2541 B.E. (1997 - 1998)

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Position: Full-time Volunteer in the  
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Department

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Position: Administrative Executive  
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January 2553 B.E. (January 2010) The One Hundred Thousand Upasika  
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April 2553 B.E. (April 2010) The Five Hundred Thousand Upasika Ordination Project

December 2553 B.E. (December 2010) The One Million Upasika Ordination Project

2553 B.E. - 2555 B.E. (2010 - 2012) The Alms-offering to the First Million Monks Nationwide Project

2555 B.E. - Present (2012 - Present) The Alms-offering to the Second Million Monks Nationwide Project

2553 B.E. - 2555 B.E. (2010 - 2012) The One Million V-Star Student Nationwide Project (The project remains going on at present 2559 B.E. (2016))

2555 B.E. – present (2012 – present) The Pilgrimage Event within the area of six provinces in the central region of Thailand (The project remains going on at present 2559 B.E. (2016))