

# Buddhist Policy to Create Soft Power for the Welfares of Human Beings<sup>\*</sup>

Suvin Ruksat<sup>1</sup>

Panachphongphan Bodhisatirawaranggoora

Graduate School, Mahamakut Buddhist University

Corresponding Author, E-mail: puzinnian@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The exploration delves into the policy of Buddhist propagation since the first missionary till now. This seems to be the concept of Soft Power as a spiritual influence rooted in attraction, cultural appeal and a transformative practice based on the Buddha's policy. The Buddha kindly ordered the first group of his missionaries, the Noble Ones, 1250 Arahantas to work for the benefit of sentient beings in the full moon of the Maga month. They had to follow and guide humankind and devas to practice the heart and essence of Buddhist principles for individuals (Ovādapatimokkha) for their own benefit and society. The Buddhist holistic of well-being of soft power on both physical and mental aspects as the inner motivation and device starts from this event and impacts the world onwards. The Noble Eightfold Path or the Middle Path is the main stream of power dynamics to foster a spiritual ethery, synergy and vitergy to be balance. Ānāpānasati is like the mental uranium to generate power to human ability. Due to this policy of spiritual soft power, it crucially contributes empathy, sympathy, loving kindness, compassion, indifference in the human mind. As far as the culture is concerned, the Buddhist policy of soft power interconnects human beings in the world with the uniqueness of liberation as the human welfares at the end.

**Keywords:** Buddhist Policy; Soft power; Welfares of Human Beings

---

<sup>\*</sup> Received May 2, 2024; Revised May 23, 2024; Accepted May 24, 2024

## Introduction

The world paradigm usually is the predator paradigm based on the occupation of others for their own benefit. Nowadays when we talk about soft power, the deep root of its origin comes from the political device. Whatever soft power is concerned in the policy or strategy of many nations; it never crosses over the realm of self-benefits. The world tries to use the soft power device to gain something from others. It is just the other side of one-coin, hard power and soft power. But the purpose never changes. The real problem is that those who use soft power are full of selfishness. They have hidden agenda by promoting soft power. That is why soft power is not much help in the world as we expect. Canonical Buddhist texts, revered for their depth of insight into the nature of consciousness and the mind (Shulman, 2021), stand as an untapped source for understanding the nuanced dynamics of soft power within a Buddhist paradigm (Thepa, 2022).

Let us look back to a kind of soft power as the Buddhist policy. The Buddha firstly prepared all missionaries to be a Noble One, an Arahanta, before sending them to serve people. The Buddha's teaching is based on what is taught to others must be perfectly done by oneself. Do teach what we do and do what we teach. Soft Power in Buddhism must be clarified by both pure principles and missionaries. In the Mahavagga of the Vinaya Pitaka, the Buddha's passages are mentioned that:

I, monks, am freed from all snares, both those of devas and those of men. And you, monks, are freed from all snares, both those of devas and those of men. Walk, monks, on tour for the blessing of the many folk, for the happiness of the many folk out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of devas and men. Let not two (of you) go by one (way). Monks, teach dhamma which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the ending. Explain with the spirit and the letter the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled, wholly pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes, who, not hearing dhamma, are decaying, (but) if they are learners of dhamma, they will grow. (mārakathā (MV.I.11.1)

Deeply investigated the above passage, we find that the address of the Buddha as his policy sharing to people is full of compassion. They have to share the soft power value without classification of people by giving the opportunity to all beings. The Buddha cared

about all beings who will lose their opportunity to hear about the real essence, especially a person who is of less defilements in their mind. That is why Buddhism has been accepted throughout the Indian region rapidly. The proof is shown the light on Buddhist Soft Power that has been applied to any culture completely without hesitation.

In order to view the Buddhist policy as a kind of soft power, we have to keep in mind that Buddhism is not such a device of any politicians or any ecclesiastical orders, but a free device of all beings who think carefully and prove by themselves, then follow and practice. As we noticed the Dhamma value taught by the Buddha that:

It is well-explained by the Blessed One (Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo). It is realizable here and now (sandittiko). It is timeless (akāliko). It invites you come and see (ehi-passiko). It is worthy to be realizing (opanayiko). It is experienced by the wise (paccattam veditabbo viññūhīti). (MN7; MI 36, PTS).

The Buddhist policy of soft power is based on the above Dhamma value. Dhamma is worthy to be induced in and by one's own mind or worthy of realizing the Dhamma leads us inwards to the peace and wisdom inherent in our own minds, but normally hidden beneath the delusion of self. Those who would like to taste the Dhamma must experience it by themselves. It opens up to the wisdom that liberates just as if we read about the taste of an orange but eat none, if we intellectually grasp the Dhamma but don't experience its truths directly, we will never know its taste, which is the taste of freedom.

In the essential purpose of article, I would like to aim at how to delve into the Buddha's policy and to create a unique manifestation of soft power for the welfares of human beings. The significance of this paper lies not only in its potentiality to contribute to the academic context but also in its capacity to provide practical insights for individuals, leaders, and societies to seek for the benefit of harmonious and influential existence. A harmonious combination of excellence and virtues is necessary for individuals to lead effectively and contribute to the success and advancement of both their lives and the organization. (Channuwong, 2018).

## The Concept of Soft Power

Soft power has received attention since around 2 decades ago. It starts from the ideology of Joseph Nye (1937), a Harvard University professor, coined the term of Soft Power in the late 1980s. It rapidly comes into widespread usage after his writing in foreign policy in 1990. It overwhelms the dominant role on the foreign policy of various countries. The concept

of Soft Power has become a concrete concept in 2007 in the topic of World Politics (Power in World Politics), which is an extension of the seminar outside the forum, organized by Millennium Journal in 2005. Now we always use soft power definition as “the ability to influence others through attraction, culture, and values. It is highlighted on the non-coercive nature of soft power. He gives the definition of power as the capacity to do things, but more specifically in social situations, the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one wants. There are many factors that affect our ability to get what we want and they vary with the context of the relationship. He found that ‘many types of resources can contribute to soft power, but that does not mean that soft power is any type of behavior. The use of force, payment, and some agenda-setting based on them is called hard power. Agenda-setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target, positive attraction, and persuasion are the parts of the spectrum of behaviors that have been included in soft power. Hard power is pushing; soft power is pulling. A common metaphor is that hard power is like brandishing carrots or sticks; soft power is more like a magnet. The main mechanism that is important in using soft Power is to create attraction to others. The consequence of using soft power must come from attraction that induces conformity without threats or exchange of anything. This is different from the traditional use of power, which is coercive power or hard power, such as the use of military power and the use of economic power that aims to threaten others. Professor Joseph Nye has mentioned that the sources of soft power include:

- 1) A culture that can influence others.
- 2) Political values both inside and outside the country.
- 3) A legitimate foreign policy and the use of power in an ethical manner.

He concluded that the concepts of soft power are like children. As an academic or a public intellectual, you can love and discipline them when they are young; but as they grow, they wander off and make new company, both good and bad. There is not much you can do about it, even if you were present at the creation. (Nye, 2021).

After the success of soft power used by the Republic of Korea or South Korea which places great importance on soft power to be its economic strategy to a new level, many countries have tried to set soft power as their policy for industry tools, including entertainment media such as dramas and K-Pop songs. Thailand stands a dominant role to use Thai culture as the Soft Power to promote the country internationally. Thai Government emphasizes on the potential of the 5 F's: Food (Food), Film and Video (Film), Thai fabrics and fashion design (Fashion), Muay Thai (Fighting) and traditional festivals (Festival) as the main theme of Thai

soft power. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has come up with guidelines to launch events and festivals to attract tourists in line with the government's "5Fs Soft Power". Thailand is characterized by the inclusive nature of its society, which respects diversity, including other racial and ethnic groups, and sexual minorities. The Thai national traits of hospitality and generosity, which embody this respect for diversity, are a form of soft power that inspires people to visit the country. Despite its comparatively small size, Thailand ranks eighth in the world (2019) in terms of the number of overseas visitors.

Let us trace back to the ground root of Thai hospitality and generosity, the important soft power that we should not forget is Theravada Buddhism. Nowadays many foreigners come to Thailand for the purpose of practice meditation according to the tradition of forest monk. The number of foreign monks also increases both in Thailand and Aboard. Thailand is a symbol of the land of yellow robe or the land of Theravada Buddhism. The world recognizes Theravada Buddhism as a pure Buddhism inheriting from the previous time till now. Forest monks should be added one more "F" in the concept of Thailand soft power.

According to the trend of tourism, slow tourism is going to be interesting. Slow tourism is one of the new trends in contemporary tourism. This trend emerged from the wider trend of the so-called "Slow Movement," which is characterized by the philosophy of slow food "slow city". The philosophy of the slow city was born in 1999 (Polyxeni Moira, 2017). People tend to associate slow tourism with a slower pace of life. Many of the stresses associated with travel are alleviated or reduced. Slow tourism involves spending longer in one place, getting to know the area and the community. Slow tourism involves pacing down, and often doing less, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the surroundings, community, and authentic culture. The meditation centers placed in the forest temples in the North and Northeast of Thailand are very attractive places to foreigners. They come to practice and associate slow tourism in order to absorb the peaceful spiritual atmosphere. By penetrating the essence of Buddhist soft power in this sense, forest monk becomes the symbolic of Buddhist meditation. It involves with the spiritual aspect of soft power.

Moreover, meditation or mindfulness relies on the transformative and attractive nature of the practice itself. Soft power of forest monk fosters mental clarity, emotional resilience, and becomes a magnet for individuals seeking spiritual change and personal growth. Indeed, forest monk should not cling with only tourism, but should be put into the national strategy as the backbone of all parts of development.

## Buddhist Policy for the Welfares of Human Beings

When we use the term policy, it seems to be used by politicians in the government. In this sense we use the term to represent helping people to gain their own welfares. Policy defines as a prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs based on a definite course or method of action selected from alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions. Buddhist policy emphasizes on the principles or methods bestowed by the Buddha for the conditions of human beings' welfares.

According to the great event of Maghapuja day, or the day of reflection of the Buddha's addressing the great teaching (Ovādapātimokkha) to a spontaneous gathering of 1250 Arahantas in the full moon of Magha month, the Buddha launched the statements as the Buddhist policy that:

‘Khantī paramaṃ tapo tītikkhā, Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā.

‘Forbearing patience is the supreme austerity, Nibbāna is supreme say the Buddhas.

Na hi pabbajito parāpaghāti, samaṇo hoti paraṃ viheṭṭhayanto.

One gone forth does not hurt another, (nor does) an ascetic harass another.

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā,

Not doing any bad deeds, undertaking wholesome (deeds),

Sacittapariyodapanaṃ – etaṃ Buddhāna’ sāsanaṃ.

And purifying one's mind – this is the teaching of the Buddhas.

Anūpavādo anūpaghāto, Pātimokkhe ca saṃvaro.

Not finding fault, not hurting, restraint in regard to the Discipline,

Mattaññutā ca bhattasmiṃ, pantañ-ca sayanāsanaṃ.

Knowing the correct measure in food, (living in) a remote dwelling place,

Adhicitta ca āyogo – etaṃ Buddhāna’ sāsanaṃ.’-ti

Being devoted to meditation – this is the teaching of the Buddhas.’

(Ovādapātimokkhaṃ The Disciplinary Advice (DN 14.13.28))

Let us delve into the policy of the Buddha in each message as follows;

### Khanti or Patience

The Buddha gives the significant Dhamma on the forbearing patience as the supreme austerity. If we contemplate on the patience, or Khanti in Buddhism, we will find that the patience is very useful for life. There are 3 types of patience, namely;

1. Dhiti Khanti means to patience on working or doing activities in normal life. People have to be patience with all difficulties in their lives. They have to endure hardship and suffering experienced in life such as bodily discomfort, noise, and distraction, the feelings of heat and coldness. All these are completely normal in our practice and we must learn to endure them. In order to live life successfully, the patience with working is the key.

2. Adivasana Khanti means the patience with illness. People who get sick or ill with a cough, a pain or a dangerous disease have to be patient with bad bodily suffering. It is not easy for one who gets sick with cancer to be patient. However, the patience with illness is needed for everyone to practice.

3. Tītikkhā Khanti means the patience with mental defilements. It is the best patience as the Buddha address to his disciples. When people hurt us through their speech or behaviour, we should not react to it with anger, hatred, or resentment. In order to practice as ascetics, they have to practice severely to attain the goal of enlightenment. There are many difficulties to obstruct their fulfillment, so the patience with mental defilement is needed to be done. That is why the Buddha said that patience is the ultimate asceticism that really helps us overcome our defilements. At a later time, the Buddha while residing at the Jetavana monastery said to Ananda, who asked him what the most important thing for a monk to practice was? The Buddha said the best ethical practice was khanti.

In the Sabbasava Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya (MN2 PTS Mi 6), the Buddha described tolerance as one of the seven methods to eradicate mental defilements (āśava) that can arise from within or from external sources. Khanti as a perfection has to be practiced with compassion for other beings without expecting gains either in this life or in future lives. According to Khantivadi Bodhisatva, (Ja 313) he was cut a part of organs by a king who got angry with him. He had no slight anger with the king. This is the patience as the perfection of the Bodhisatva.

### **Nibbāna or the Summum Bonum**

The Buddha says that Nibbāna is supreme. The cessation of suffering is Nibbāna. Nibbāna is the end of life. Liberation is Nibbāna. In the Buddhist tradition, Nibbāna has commonly been interpreted as the extinction of the “three fires” namely; fire of greed (raga), fire of hatred (dosa) and delusion (Moha). Nibbāna has also been claimed by attaining the state of non-self or Anatta and the state of emptiness or Sunyata. The Buddha’s disciples have to practice for the end of suffering.

### **No harm and no harassment**

Harming and harassing is the violent behavior. It is not the way of recluse life. It is the good basic principle of human beings. Harming and hurting are restraining not only through bodily action but also verbal action and not only harming and hurting the human beings, sentient beings but also environments. Buddhist monastic rules pay serious attention to no harming nor harassing others. Those who do against this basic principle are not the ascetics.

### **Not doing any bad deeds**

Bad deeds are classified into three parts according to three doors of action, namely;

1. Bodily bad actions refer to killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct.
2. Verbal bad actions refer to talking false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech and frivolous speech.
3. Mental bad actions refer to avarice, ill will and wrong view.

All bad deeds or Unwholesome are restraint for all Buddhists, particularly his disciples. They have to prevent their actions and remind themselves to be far from these bad deeds.

### **Undertaking wholesome deeds**

Good deeds are also classified into three parts according to three doors of action as the opposite from the above actions, namely;

1. Bodily good actions refer to not killing, not taking what is not given and not behaving sexual misconduct.
2. Verbal good actions refer to not talking false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech and frivolous speech.
3. Mental good actions refer to abstain being greedy, not be angry and be of right views.

All Buddhists, particularly his disciples take good deeds to cultivate themselves. They have to practice and spend full effort to control and remind themselves to be do more and more good deeds.

### **Purifying one's mind**

Normally, mind is full of defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion, from which emerge their numerous offshoots and variants: anger and cruelty, avarice and envy, conceit and arrogance, hypocrisy and vanity, the multitude of erroneous views. All disciples have to purify their minds by Buddhist methods. The defilements in which the Buddha declared, lie at the bottom of all human suffering. Burning within from lust and craving, from rage and resentment, people could lay to waste hearts, lives, hopes, and civilizations, and



drive us blind and thirsty through the round of birth and death. So, the defilements are such as bonds, fetters, hindrances, and knot sentient beings to be suffering.

The work of purification must be undertaken in the same place where the defilements arise, in the mind itself, and the main method the Dhamma offers for purifying the mind is meditation. Meditation, in the Buddhist training, is neither a quest for self-effusive ecstasies nor a technique of home-applied psychotherapy, but a carefully devised method of mental development theoretically precise and practically efficient for attaining inner purity and spiritual freedom. The principal tools of Buddhist meditation are the core wholesome mental factors of energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding. But in the systematic practice of meditation, these are strengthened and yoked together in a program of self-purification which aims at extirpating the defilements roots and branches so that not even the subtlest unwholesome stirrings remain. (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1998).

#### **Not finding fault**

In this sense, one should not focus on attention to other's faults. According to the Sutta, the Buddha said that the wise should not focus on other's faults. If one sees, should keep quiet, do not proclaim or criticize. Instead of one own fault one should not hide, but should tell others to know. The world is opposite from the Buddha's teaching. People always find fault of others, then gossip and criticize to pillory and bully them. Buddhist disciples should not act by finding fault.

#### **Not hurting people**

The way to hurt people is more complicated than we think. Nowadays many people hurt each other with intention and without intention, directly and indirectly. The word "Bully" is a kind of hurting by force, coercion, teasing, threatening, abusing, aggressively dominating, intimidating. It becomes behavior and habit. Bullying is a subcategory of aggressive behavior characterized by hostile intent, imbalance of power and repetition over a period of time. Really speaking, hurting or bullying is usually characterized by a person behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. (Bullying-Wikipedia, 2024) The Buddha always teaches his disciples to contribute compassion to sentient beings. Therefore, hurting people is a bad behavior that should not be done.

#### **Restraint in regard to the Discipline**

The Ovādapātimokkha is the first discipline in Buddhism. Later on, the Buddha laid down the monastic training rules in order to set a proper Sangha or Family. The advantages of all monastic rules are for the well-being of the Sangha, for the comfort of the Sangha, for

the restraint of bad people, for the ease of good monks, for the restraint of the corruptions relating to the present life, for the restraint of the corruptions relating to future lives, to give rise to confidence in those without it, to increase the confidence of those who have it, for the longevity of the true Teaching, and for supporting the training. (V.5.11.31) All disciples have to restrain in regard to the discipline for above purposes.

### **Knowing the correct measure in food**

Food is one of the four requisites of human beings. The Buddha pays a significant notion on food by both eating and seeking for. Food concerns directly with animal lives and spiritual development. So, the Buddha's disciples have to be aware of food by wisely reflecting as follow;

I use this food not for fun, not for pleasure, not for fattening, not for beautification, but only for the maintenance and nourishment of this body, for keeping it healthy, for helping with the Spiritual Life; Thinking thus, I will allay hunger without overeating, so that I may continue to live blamelessly and at ease.

(Buddhist Meal Prayers to Chant Before Eating, 2024)

The food didn't complete and cook itself. There are many conditions, such as cooks, farmers, groceries and transportation, cooking gas, vegetable or even meats, etc. If people think about every hand and transaction between rice and food in plate, they realize that this food is the culmination of countless people. So, they should give them our gratitude. The Buddha's disciples always remind themselves about lives which connects with others. Do not trouble others.

### **Living in a remote dwelling place**

According to a recluse's life, it is a life based on training oneself to be pure. A place to stay is a condition to cultivate spiritual purification. The Buddha always points to his disciples to live in a remote dwelling place or the suitable place for monks to cultivate themselves. There are 3 seclusions in where monks should search for, namely; bodily seclusion, mental seclusion and defilement seclusion. (Nb 26,140,157,341) Particularly bodily seclusion, it means the quiet places to practice meditation in order to seclude body such as forests, tree trunks, mountains, gorges, caves, cemeteries, open forests, open areas, covered with straw, and where one is physically quiet walking alone, standing alone, sitting alone, lying down alone, entering the house to receive alms alone, returning alone, sitting alone. He makes decision walking meditation alone, traveling, living, changing posture alone. By training bodily seclusion, the Buddha's disciples will develop in spiritual higher state.

### **Being devoted to meditation**

Talking about Buddhist disciples' duties, there are two, namely; learning (Gantha dhura) and practicing (Vipassana Dhura) (DhA.1.7) The Buddha's disciples must study what he has given recorded in the Tipitaka. Then monks must follow his teaching particularly meditation. In the context of Buddhist meditation, Buddhism emphasizes on the Four foundations of mindfulness. It seems to be all conditions of Buddhist recluses. By mediation, mental seclusion and defilement seclusion will be fulfilled.

From the first word till the last word of Buddhist policy for the welfares of human beings, we will find that the Buddha emphasizes on individual cultivation. As long as the individual ability has been cultivated, society will develop inevitably. The welfares of human beings will be successful.

### **Buddhist Soft Power for the Welfares of Human Beings**

In this part, the article will be delved into the root cause of Buddhist soft power. Unless Buddhist mediation seriously practiced, the welfares of human beings cannot be sustainable. Buddhist meditation itself is the root of Buddhist soft power. The more Buddhist meditation is cultivated, the more happiness we will find. There are many kinds of meditation in the world. Meditation seems to be the ascetic way to live for the highest state from the previous time till now. Furthermore, it is provided for many purposes nowadays. As we have known, in the Vedic age, the norm of life is based on four steps or 4 Ashrams. The last Ashram is the Sanyasi life. Sanyasi must practice meditation and isolate himself till death. According to Yoga tradition, the practice of Yoga consists of the eight constituents yama, i.e., niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. (Chamnean Saengsin, 2004). Yoga means meditation. That is why we have to know exactly Buddhist meditation as a mean of soft power to create happiness of human beings.

### **Buddhist Meditation**

As long as Buddhist meditation is concerned, *Ānāpānasati* plays the dominant role in term of a famous and prevalent method from the previous time till now. *Ānāpānasati* is the meditation system expressly taught by the Buddha in which mindful breathing is used to develop both samadhi and vipassana. This practice-said to be the form of meditation that brought the Buddha to full awakening is based on the *Ānāpānasati*. In this clear and detailed teaching, the Buddha presents a meditation practice that uses conscious breathing to calm the mind so that it is fit to see into itself, to let go into freedom. The Buddha confirms that

those who practice *Ānāpānasati*, the four foundation of mindfulness is cultivated. Whenever the four foundations of mindfulness have been cultivated, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment will be gradually developed. Whenever the Seven Factors of Enlightenment have been cultivated, the knowledge and liberation are achieved respectively.

The transformative nature of mindfulness directly reshapes our relationship with the constant stream of thoughts, emotions, and external stimuli that often preoccupy our minds. By bringing conscious awareness to the breath, mindfulness overwhelms thoughts and feelings without sending to external objects. This non-reactive observation creates a space for intentional responses rather than impulsive reactions. It offers a right way to greater emotional resilience, stress reduction, and enhanced overall well-being. In essence, mindfulness is a transformative journey that unfolds in the present, allowing individuals to navigate the complexities of existence with a sense of clarity, balance, and an awakened consciousness. It is not merely a practice but a way of being that holds the potential to profoundly impact how we perceive, experience, and respond to the world around us. (Dr. Sharma Khemraj, 2023)

According to the *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, the steps of breathing are completely shown as follows:

“There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.[1] Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

“[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.' [2] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

“[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I

will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.' [5]

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion [literally, fading].' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

"This is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit. (MN 118, PTS; M iii 78)

One who develops and pursues *Ānāpānasati*, accomplishes the great fruit, the great benefit. Therefore, *Ānāpānasati* is able to build such a noble man in the world. We will find both tranquillized meditation and insight meditation intermingling together. Both meditations help each other to impulse wisdom to realize the truths. What are the truths? There are the Four Noble Truths. Buddhist mediation aims at abandoning the five aggregates as non self. As the Buddha said in the Discourse on the Simile of the Snake (*Alagaddupama-sutta*) that:

"Bhikkhus, what do you think? If people carried off the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in this Jeta Grove, or burned them, or did what they liked with them, would you think: 'People are carrying us off or burning us or doing what they like with us?' No, venerable sir. Why not? Because that is neither our self nor what belongs to our self. So too, bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it; when you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time. What is it that is not yours? Material form is not yours ... Feeling is not yours ... Perception is not yours ... Formations are not yours ... Consciousness is not yours. Abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time." (*Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, 235*)

The Buddha always pointed the law of Dhamma to his disciples that all things are impermanent, suffering and non-self. Whenever person see the Dhamma, he/she sees the three Characteristics automatically. Applying this insight to human nature, a person is merely a collection of psycho-physical elements or “aggregates” (khandhas) – body, feelings, perceptions, volitions, consciousness – that give rise to a causal pattern we identify as a particular individual. It does not follow from the relative stability of this pattern, however, that there must be an underlying essence. These key concepts, impermanence, non-self, and conditioned co-arising as the path leading to the direct awareness of the realities described by them would become the focus of rigorous philosophical examination and debate. (Steven M. Emmanuel., 2013).

### **Psycho-Analysis of Ānāpānasati Meditation**

In Reality, breath meditation is very famous in the Yoga school of thought. Yogis or recluses or ascetics always practice breath meditation called Pranayama (Sanskrit: प्राणायाम, “Prāṇāyāma”). In yoga, breath is associated with prana, thus, pranayama is a means to elevate the prana-shakti, or life energies. Pranayama is described in Hindu texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Later in Hatha yoga texts, it meant the complete suspension of breathing. The pranayama practices in modern yoga as exercise are unlike those of the Hatha yoga tradition. “When the mind is still, it gets the power to fulfill any thought.” Prana is a life force in us that nourishes the mind and keeps the body alive”. (Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, 2023).

Despite having a connection to the breath, prana is not the breath. Prana is an energy that flows through thousands of subtle energy channels called nadis and energy centers called chakras. Nadi means “stream”. According to the tantric treatise Shiva Samhita, there are fourteen principal nadis. Of these, Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are considered the most important. (Nadis, [2024](#)). Nadis creates an aura around the body. The quantity and quality of prana and the way it flows through the nadis and chakras determine one’s state of mind. The movement and energy of prana, the cosmic energy flowing through us and around us, is influenced by our actions, thoughts, and especially the way we breathe. According to the Yoga Sutras, pranayama (breath control) is the witness-consciousness, as distinct from prakriti, the cognitive apparatus. Breath focusing is the meditative technique to calm thought process effectively. These practices are designed to train the brain and the mind to embrace life as it actually is. When we can do that, we wind up being much less stressed. Ultimately, most of our stress comes from fighting reality (Harvard Medical School, 2014).

The paper, firstly, mentions about the breathing meditation as being prevalent in the Buddha's time. If we do not know the context of Buddhist meditation, we may misunderstand about complicated context of meditation. Whenever the inhalation and exhalation is controlled by mindfulness and wisdom more longer, the new experience about the reality of life will appear. If one mindfully notices the breath changing, the subtle breath is like without breathing. The feeling of calmness exists in this moment. Technical term is called Jhanangas or Factor of meditative absorption. There are five meditative absorptions, namely thought-conception, thought process, rapture, joy and one pointedness. It is called the first Jhana. As the passages in the Sallekkha Sutta, in Majjhima Nikaya mentioned that:

It may be, Cunda, that some monk, detached from sense-objects, detached from unsalutary ideas, enters into the first absorption that is born of detachment, accompanied by thought-conception and discursive thinking, and filled with rapture and joy, and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.'  
(MN 1.8)

According to Buddhist tradition, one should firstly keep in mind that there is no self or Atta in the five aggregates. This is very important in Buddhism. Because the view of Atta is the obstacle of higher spiritual development in Buddhism. In order to dispel the view of Atta, one should realize in the Jhana as non-self. In this regard the Buddha said to Venerable Cunda that:

“Cunda, there are various views in the world centered around the self and the world, from whatever these views arise, from whatever these views trickle, from whatever these views behave, they are not mine, that is not I, they are not myself, to one who looks at them, as they really are, in this manner with right wisdom, these views get turned out, get dispelled. (MN 1.8)

By following the breath continuously, the gradual spiritual development of Jhana arises. The factors of meditative absorption disappear. The hindrances also disappear. At this moment of Jhana process, the indifference and one pointedness still remain. Psychic insight is very pure and powerful. The attainment of what aggregate really is arises. Emancipation or liberation exists through mindfulness and alertness all the time. According to the psychic states and neurotic cell is changing in the positive expectation. At least the neurons in the sensory neurons, motor neurons, and interneurons will function in the detachment or indifference states which connect with relaxation sphere.

According to the brainwaves research, the theta brainwaves have a frequency of approximately 4–8 cycles per second (Hz). Theta brain waves are a very relaxing state where the brain works very slowly. It is found that this type of wave can occur normally during the period when people are in a state of deep sleep. Likewise, in meditating at a certain level of depth, is similar to theta brainwaves. In the alpha state, there is happiness, comfort, forgetting about suffering, and more joy. This condition has linked to seeing various images. The brain in the theta wave range is like a reservoir of inspiration to provoke creativity that resides deep within people's minds. Therefore, the theta wave can reflect the activity of the work of the subconscious mind and subconscious mind which is the function of most of the human brain.

The Delta brainwaves have also a frequency of approximately 0.5 - 4 cycles per second (Hz). It is the slowest brain wave. This state causes the body to relax at a very high level. This wave causes brain connects to the part of the unconscious mind such as while the body is sleeping deeply without dreaming, or while in deep meditation at the Jhana level. During this period, brain waves show that the body is fully immersed in deep relaxation. It can be compared to charging energy into a new body. Those who go through deep sleep for the right amount of time will feel especially refreshed (D. Corydon Hammond, 2011).

There is a connection between brain waves, meditation and mental relaxing states. In the scientific approvement, there is no doubt about Buddhist mediation effected. Whenever those who practice meditation, their mind and body become changing in the right positive manner. This point of view concerns with psycho-analysis in term of Ānāpānasati Meditation.

Furthermore, Buddhist meditation still exists as the Soft Power in term of the spiritual mindset. Because Buddhist meditation takes a tremendous power to cultivate mindfulness to overwhelm thought process to be in controlling. It deserves as the soft power not only the outside aspect, but also the inside aspect. The outside dimension shows some light on the 5 factors of Buddhism, i.e., the Buddha image, teachings, monks, monastic architecture and ritual. Buddhism itself is called soft power. Of course, Buddhist meditation is the core practice as the Buddha's teaching to be lean on. When we talk about soft power, it seems to be the power of culture and civilization. All factors of Buddhism can be called soft power. Let us delve in each factor.

### **1. The Buddha images**

After the Buddha's images sculpted in the late 5<sup>th</sup> Buddhist era, the Buddha's images have been developed from age to age based on each culture. They have been a specimen of the Buddha. The way Buddhists behave to the Buddha images is like doing in front of the



Buddha. The Buddha images become soft power as it spiritually empowers people to do the same thing without coercion.

## **2. The Buddha's teaching**

According to the Ovādapātimokkha as the Buddha's first policy of his teaching, both orders and teachings become soft power spreading throughout the countries. It seems to be the Noble culture and civilization that deliberately accepted by people. The Buddha's teaching spread throughout the Asia continental region in the previous time, also the world in the present day. The leaned persons and scholars fully delight on the Buddha's teaching that could cure the suffering.

## **3. Monks or His Disciples**

From the beginning of Buddha's time, the Buddha's disciples were the symbol of soft power itself. They behave, work, propagate and transform Buddhism to the society. They inspire people to accept Buddhism and solve problems for people. Sentient beings get benefit from the noble ones and release suffering by their helping. The soft power of helping and inspiring is very powerful to people to be a monk.

## **4. Monastic Architecture or Temple**

We could not deny that temple is the useful place of community. It is not only the place where monks live, but also the place where laities get benefit for their purposes. Moreover, temple is built by the architectural technology. Temple, therefore, is full of spiritual beauty and emotional attraction. The monastic architecture is enhanced by soft power to the people. For example, the iron castle temple or Lohapasadh where was supported by Visakha Upasika seems to be the first architecture found in the Tipitaka. It located at the Pubbharama temple. A reason in which foreigners come to visit Buddhist countries is because of the attraction of Monastic Architecture.

## **5. Buddhist Ritual**

Buddhist ritual is comprised of both monk's disciplinal ritual and Buddhist lays' performance ritual. Technical term called Sanghakamma for monk's disciplinal ritual. It is called Thambun in Thai language or merit performance for Buddhist lays' ritual. Through Buddhist ritual, soft power still conserves the essence of Buddhist tradition to people. Buddhist ritual is easily mixed with national tradition and culture. Soft power seems to be the national tradition as the intangible force.

Buddhist soft power mentioned above function together to share peaceful value to sentient beings. Human welfare is not only the ultimate welfare, but also the mundane

welfare. Both welfares of sentient beings are needed for the world. Buddhist soft power contributes the livelihood of sentient beings. It inspires people to practice, perform and transform to each other. The more Buddhist soft power has been practiced; the more happiness can be deserved.

### **How to Create Buddhist Soft Power**

According to the Sila Sutta, in Anguttara Nikāya, Pancaka Nipāta, the Buddha addresses the way how to cultivate oneself to be dear and beloved, respected and admired to Buddhists, as follows;

They're very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, reinforcing them by recitation, mentally scrutinizing them, and comprehending them theoretically. (AN.5/87)

Comprehendingly speaking, we can use the Buddhist learning process as a transformation skill to cultivate soft power in 5 steps, namely;

1. **Suta – Learning:** It literally means listening. In the learning process aspect, it means the five sense-organs function gathering all data as the learning materials. These days we appreciate those who have much data for working. Data will be a learning resource to be experienced. It is the first thing that human can do through his or her sense-organs. In this sense, Buddhists have to study the Buddha's teaching as much as they can. The Buddha teachings have to be learned through their organs to absorb and experience.

2. **Dhatā – Remembering:** Human being could not remember everything what they have learned. However human beings could select what should be remembered as the key issue. They have to get the points of what are the core teaching of the Buddha. The Ovadapatimokkha, the Four Noble truths, the Three Characteristics, the Dependent Origination are the core teachings that should be remembered.

3. **Vacasā Paricitā – Transforming:** It literally means recitation. In this sense, it means how to transform what the Buddha's teaching remembered to others correctly. It is a very important step to create Buddhist soft power. Soft power could be directly transformed from one to another by communication.

4. **Manasānupekkhitā – Analyzing Synthesizing:** Buddhism focuses on what should be thought carefully. Whatever we find, hear, experience, should be mentally scrutinized appropriately. Wholesome and Unwholesome are as the key performance index (KPI) to accept or believe. If soft power based on the wholesome state, i.e., loving kindness, compassion, sympathy joy, and equanimity, one can accept, believe and practice. If soft power based on the unwholesome, i.e., killing, stealing, sexual misconducting, and telling lie, one should neglect.

5. **Ditthiyā Supatividdā – Right Implementing:** After we analyzed and scrutinized soft power obviously, we have to apply and implement them to our life style theoretically and systematically. Buddhist Soft power will be empowered through serious action. It is the fact that Buddhist culture and civilization have spread throughout the world because of right implementation.

As a matter of fact, the right meditation will work as the mental uranium in order to explore the quality of mind. Quality of mind gradually derives from the breath meditation. Ānāpānasati firstly tranquilizes the mind to be still and then to extinguish any hindrances from the mind. The more mindfulness is aware of breathing, the clearer insight is achieved. The Ānāpānasati directly leads to extraction of self-attachment. The higher step of Ānāpānasati is to attain the liberation state. The soft power of noble one's living will create the atmosphere of peaceful mind, community, society and nation. The Noble One who acts as the human soft power is needed to live in all parts of the world. The Buddha creates the Noble Ones as a soft power in society to yield another peaceful result. The forest monks or the learned monks are more powerful to contribute Buddhist soft power to the welfare of sentient beings in the world.

## Conclusion

The real soft power must be for the authentic purpose of the humanity's welfare. Buddhist policy aims an attempt for the benefit of sentient beings since Buddhism taken place. The Noble Ones are trained to be a tangible soft power who can further create the intangible soft power. The first policy of human soft power, the Ovādapātimokkha is the fundamental principle of Buddhists to propagate for all human beings. Each valuable word of the Buddha reflects the concept of Buddhism. By keeping in mind and practicing the Buddha's discipline, sentient beings can live peacefully, work harmoniously and can attain the liberation definitely. Buddhist soft power fosters the soft mind to be compassionate. Ānāpānasati is as a uranium

element of the mental power to generate for all knowledge, wisdom and behavior as well. In order to create such a soft power, five steps of the leaned one should be set up as the learning progress as follows;

1. Listening deeply to realize what the Buddha teaching it is.
2. Reciting and gasping the core concept of the Buddha's teaching to rely about what should be raised in the right time.
3. Transforming and communicating the tacit knowledge to be explicit knowledge about what should be done or should not be done deliberately.
4. Analyzing and synthesizing the Buddha's teaching into the 5 components of Buddhism to enhance about what should create an innovation for specific purpose.
5. Applying and implementing Buddhist innovation as a soft power for the right time and the right place.

The model of Buddhist policy to create soft power for the welfare of human beings can be composed as below;



**Figure 3:** Buddhist policy to create soft power model (Suvin Ruksat)

## References

- Bhikkhu Bodhi. (1998). Purification of Mind Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 5 June 2010, [http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay\\_04.html](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_04.html).)
- Chamnean Saengsin. (2004). A Comparative Study of Meditation in the Yoga Sutta and the Suttanta Pitaka. Silpakorn University.
- Channuwong, S., Ruksat, S., and Ploychum, S. (2018). An integration of Buddhist teachings in stress management. *Journal of Community Development Research*. 11 (4), 148-158.
- Corydon D. Hammond. (2011). What is Neurofeedback: An Update. *Journal of Neurotherapy*, 15(4), (October, 2011): 305–336.)

- H.T. Francis, R.A. Neil. (1987). Khantīvadījāta Stories of the Buddha's Former Births. <https://suttacentral.net/ja313/en/francisneil?lang=en&reference=none&highlight=false>. Retrieved March 10, 2024.
- Maurice Walshe, (1995). Digha Nikaya The Long Discourses, Ovādapātimokkha, 14.3.28. <https://archive.org/details/DighaNikaya/DighaNikayaSinglePaged./page/n217/mode/2u>
- Nyanaponika Thera, Tran. (1998). Vatthupama Sutta: The Simile of the Cloth. (MN 7 PTS: MI 36). <https://accesstosight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.007.nypo.html>
- Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu , and Bodhi , Bhikkhu (trans.) ( 1995 ). The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha. Boston: Wisdom.
- Nye, J. S. (2021). Soft power: the evolution of a concept. Journal of Political Power, DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572, p.1-2
- O'Brien, Barbara. (2020). Buddhist Verses to Chant Before Eating. Learn Religions. Retrieved Aug. 25, 2020. [learnreligions.com/giving-thanks-for-our-food-449751](https://learnreligions.com/giving-thanks-for-our-food-449751).
- Polyxeni Moira. (2017). The Application of Slow Movement to Tourism: Is Slow Tourism a New Paradigm? Journal of Tourism and Leisure Studies. Volume 2, Issue p.3 [www.tourismandleisurestudies.com](http://www.tourismandleisurestudies.com)
- Shulman, E. (2021). Canonical Belief Narratives of the Buddha: Folklore and Religion in the Early Buddhist Discourses. Narrative Culture, 8(2), 187-217.
- Steven M. Emmanuel. (2013). A companion to Buddhist philosophy Edited by Steven M. Emmanuel. Blackwell companions to philosophy. A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication.
- Thai Government. (2024) Soft Power (5F) of Thailand attracts tourists. [https://thailand.go.th/issue-focus-detail/001\\_02\\_070](https://thailand.go.th/issue-focus-detail/001_02_070), 10 March 2024.
- Thanisaro Bhikkhu. (2007) Vinaya Pitaka Tran. mārakathā (Mv.I.11.1) <https://www.dhammatalks.org/vinaya/Mv/MvI.html#burmese9>
- Thanisaro Bhikkhu. Tran. (2010). Majjhima Nikaya, Sabbasava Sutta: Discourse on All Āsavas. <https://archive.org/details/DighaNikaya/DighaNikayaSinglePaged./page/n217/mode/2up>
- Thepa, P. C. A. (2022). Mindfulness: A Buddhism Dialogue of Sustainability Wellbeing. In 2022 International Webinar Conference on the World Chinese Religions. Nanhua University. Taiwan. <https://urlcc.cc/sysek>.

Weragada Sarada Thero (1993). Dhammapada, Treasury of Truth. <https://archive.org/details/PaliCommentariesCollection/05.02%20Dhammapada%2C%20Treasury%20of%20Truth> Retrieved March 10, 2024.