

CETIYA (PAGODA) AS A COMMUNICATION OF BUDDHIST CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Background: This academic article aimed to study The Cetiya or Stupa which is a repository for The Lord Buddha's relics and considered a sacred place. After The time of The Great Decease of The Lord Buddha, Buddhist monks and laymen managed to handle The Lord Buddha's remains in the traditional manner. During the reign of Emperor Ashoka the Great, he ordered that the "Sanchi Great Stupa" be built, which was later the model for the construction of other great Cetiya and Stupa in different parts of the world and also influenced Buddhist doctrine, belief, culture, philosophy and morals. Cetiya construction in ancient India developed from a simple mound above the grave to a bell shape and other shapes over time after mixing with local patterns. In terms of symbolic significance, Cetiya convey certain elements of Buddhist philosophy. For instance, Cetiya's round-shaped base refers to Samsàravatta, or the round of existence or The Wheel of Rebirth, while a rectangular base refers to Satipatthàna or The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, for the purpose of considering the cause of impurities. The second level of the rectangular base of Cetiya reminds us of the principle of Iddhipàda (The Four Paths of Accomplishment), while the middle part or body of the Cetiya refers to Magga 4 (The Four Noble Paths) and Phala 4 (The Four Consequences), the top part of The Cetiya refers to The Attainment of Absolute Truth or Nibbàna.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: However, when Buddhists comes to pay homage to a Cetiya, they will first think of The Lord Buddha and then The Dhamma. For instance, the symbols found at Phra Borommathat Chedi in Nakhon Si Thammarat can be interpreted in Buddhist philosophy as follows. The Càga principle refers to sacrifice, that is, the construction of Cetiya requires sacrifice by the antecedent, who might have to renounce huge amounts of money and other properties. The principle of Katannukatavedità refers to the quality of being a grateful person who is thankful for any benefits received from the antecedent and The Lord Buddha, The Dhamma and The Sangha. The principle of Three Characteristics or Tilakkhana which the Cetiya has been erected, it stands for a certain period of time before gradually decaying by natural forces, and then needs repair periodically. The Cetiya can also be compared as Sumeru (Mount Meru), which is considered to be the center of the Universe. It is surrounded by seven tiers of smaller mounts while The Lord Buddha held the position superior to Indra. This means that The Lord Buddha was superior to Cātummahàràjikà or The Four Guardian Deities, who were closest to human beings and were

in charge of protecting The Four Directions of The World. Moreover, ASEAN countries follow Theravada Buddhism include Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and some parts of Malaysia. For Vietnam and Singapore, these countries believe in Mahayana Buddhism. The countries with the same denomination will have a similar Cetiya design. This is the role of Buddhists to preserve Buddhism, and it is the duty of the King to protect the country peacefully by using religion to create peacefulness and stability.

Conclusions: Therefore, the construction of Cetiya has been collected the relics of Lord Buddha, Noble disciples, religious relics or even the bones of ancestors and important people. Cetiya has been seen as spiritual centers for Buddhists while at the same time communicating Buddhist philosophy which can symbolize a religious foundation. Furthermore, a Cetiya is able to communicate nationality, religions and the king, the three pillars of the nation and is a symbol of communication, which has the role of inheriting The Dhamma and philosophy principles representing the sanctuary of Buddhism. Again, Cetiya is a source of culture, tradition, arts, history, literature, rites, festivals, local, state and international tourism, as well as being a mechanism for the establishment of relationships among different ethnic groups, either in the past or in the future.

Keywords: Cetiya (Pagoda), Communication of Buddhist Culture, Philosophy, ASEAN Countries

Introduction

Perceived as a sacred shrine for housing The Lord Buddha's relics, Cetiya have been significant for Buddhists all over the world from The Lord Buddha's time to the present date. The construction of Cetiya and the worship tradition have been inherited from generation to generation. This largely involves the belief that one who pays homage to The Cetiya will be blessed. In Buddhist countries, the king plays an important role in the construction of Cetiya, as it is believed that it is the duty of the Buddhist king to cherish Buddhism, which will lead to peace, order and prosperity in the kingdom.

Cetiya or Stupa (sometime collectively called Stupacetiya) refers to a structure built for housing The Lord Buddha's and other holy monks' relics. There are 4 types of Cetiya in Buddhism, (TM.(Thai) 10/202/151) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) namely, 1) Dhàtucetiya 2) Paribhogacetiya 3) Dhammacetiya and 4) Uddesikacetiya. In particular, Dhàtucetiya is intended to house Phra Dhatu, or bone ash, which was in the past built over a grave for worshipping purposes.

The concept of Cetiya construction in Buddhism first appeared in The Maha Parinibbàna Sutra in which The Lord Buddha said that the Buddhist laymen should build up his Cetiya at the main intersection that they used to treat the royal remains of King Chakkrabhat. (TM.(Thai) 10/204-206/152-154) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) Then The Lord Buddha taught about the persons for whom we should build up Stupa (TM.(Thai) 10/206/153) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) including: 1) The Lord Buddha 2) The Lonely Buddhas 3) The Lord Buddha's disciples 4) King Chakkrabhat, etc. According to HRH Prince

Damrong Rajanubhab (2010), he proposed that "Cetiya existed before The Lord Buddha period and it had been used for housing not only King Chakkrabhat's relics but also those of other persons, such as Titthiya (an adherent of another religion) or priests of Jainism." The term "The Lord Buddha's intention" refers to his intention to maintain Buddhist tradition when coming to the end of life, as he rested on a seat between two Sala Trees in Sala Wanothayan of Kushinagar. Ānanda asked The Lord Buddha how to handle his remains after his death; he replied that the noble king, the noble Brahmin and the noble wealthy person who believes in The Lord Buddha should treat The Lord Buddha's remains in the same manner as they treat King Chakkrabhat's remains. (TM.(Thai) 10/202/151) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996)

Ānanda further asked "How did they treat King Chakkrabhat's remains?" The Lord Buddha replied, "They wrapped King Chakkrabhat's remains with silk cloth, then with soaked up cotton and it wrapped again with silk cloth until the remains were covered by cloth with 500 layers before leaving the body in an iron groove full of oil and covered by another groove before placing them on the funeral pyre, decorated with variety of flowers. After cremation, King Chakkrabhat's relics were housed in a Stupa at the main intersection of the city. Oh Ānanda! This was how they treated King Chakkrabhat's remains and so The Lord Buddha's remains should be treated in the same manner, including a Stupa on the main intersection so that people could come to pay homage and get blessed eternally." (UM.(Thai) 10/204-206/152-154) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) After The Lord Buddha's death (Parinibbāna), his relics were dispersed and did not pool in one place. It was believed that if any The Lord Buddha relics were dispersed to different countries, this suggested that The Lord Buddha had great virtue and glory, being capable of helping more people all over the world. During the reign of Emperor Ashoka the Great, he ordered that 84,000 Stupas housing The Lord Buddha's relics be built up throughout the land of ancient India, allowing Buddhists to pay homage and be blessed.

The above information strongly suggests that building up Cetiya or Stupa in Buddhism was the direct intention of The Lord Buddha, and also that the concept of building up Stupa had only existed in Buddhism since The Lord Buddha's lifetime. For instance, when Sāriputta, one of two chief male disciples of The Lord Buddha, attained Nirvana (passed away) and after his cremation, The Lord Buddha instructed his followers to build up Cetiya to house Sāriputta's partial relics at Jetavana Gate of Shravasti, and another one to hold the remaining relics in his homeland. The notion of Stupa or Cetiya construction existed before The Lord Buddha's lifetime, as HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (2015) stated in his writings, "Legend of Buddhist Cetiya", stating that "Stupa was originally built up for holding relics as one of the traditions existing in Central India before The Lord Buddha period." Stupa was also thought to be a kind of sacred place made by ancient Indians, especially Shakyawong, who invented a new tradition in their own group for handling their deceased relatives through cremation and keeping the relics for worship under the huge structure called Stupa." The Fine Arts Department (1990) explained that "Stupa or Cetiya means memorial place built up for worship by the general public. Literally, Cetiya has broader scope than Stupa, but both of them are for paying homage by the descendant."

Having heard of the death of The Lord Buddha, the kings of various kingdoms sent their diplomatic missions to Kushinagar of The Malla Region, to ask for a share of The Lord Buddha's relics after the cremation. Those diplomats agreed that Donabrahmin would coordinate the allocation of The Lord Buddha's relics. Donabrahmin once stated, "Please, your Excellency, listen to me and listen to me alone. Our Lord Buddha taught us about the virtue of patience. It was not right to let this disharmony exist amongst us. We should all agree to divide the relics into 8 parts. May the Stupa be wildly built up in all directions!" The relics were then allocated to all diplomats, 2 Thanan each, which were brought back to their homeland for worship by Buddhists. A Stupa (Cetiya) was then constructed to hold the relics. For example, King Ajatashatru of Magadha in East India ordered a Stupa holding The Lord Buddha's relics in Rajgir, Licchavis of Vajji ordered a Stupa be built up in Vesali, King Shakya of Shakka did the same in Kapilavastu, etc.

Therefore, Stupa (Cetiya) focused on the places built up for inheriting faithfulness and respect for great persons such as The Lord Buddha, etc. It holds the tradition that one generation wishes to pass down to the next one. As a communicating symbol, it plays an important role in disseminating the Buddhist concept and at the same time represents a holy place for worship by Buddhists. (TM.(Thai) 10/206/153) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) The Writer would like to propose how Cetiya in Buddhism is related to Buddhist philosophy, communication, culture and traditions.

In addition, a Cetiya used for holding The Lord Buddha's relics after the time of the demise of The Lord Buddha was a memorial place and spiritual center for the general public. A Cetiya was, therefore, constructed in different cities where Buddhism had been definitely established. Although a Cetiya has been studied in different aspects, there have been few studies researching its role as a form of communication of The Buddhist culture and philosophy in ASEAN countries. As a result, this caused the writer to be interested in this aspect.

The Origin and Development of Cetiya

The construction of a Cetiya was found to exist before The Lord Buddha's lifetime. According to Suttantapiṇaka (AN.(Thai) 21/118/180) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) it mentions about The Lord Buddha's statement relating to important sites that Buddhists should visit to remind them of the grace of The Lord Buddha; namely, The Four Holy Places for a Buddhist pilgrimage comprising: 1) The place of birth of The Lord Buddha, 2) The place of attainment of enlightenment, 3) The place where Dhamma was first taught, and 4) The place for his attainment of Parinirvana.

One of the most significant Buddhist arts where The Lord Buddha attained Parinirvana and his cremation took place is the "Makut Phantha Chedi" located in the East of Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh, India. The Lord Buddha himself stated that "They should treat The Lord Buddha's remains in the same manner, as they did to the body of King Chakkrabhat." and "They should build a stupa at the main intersection." to which Buddhists could pay homage with flowers, fragrance or powder with faithfulness so that they would be blessed for eternity." (TM.(Thai) 10/204-206/152-154) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996)

Later, the pattern, concept and belief about the cremation site was developed until the construction of the "Great Sanchi Stupa" in Madhya Pradesh, India during the reign of Emperor Ashoka the Great. (Phra Phromkunaphon (P. A. Pyutto), 2009) This Stupa was recognized as the first one with the most grandeur housing The Lord Buddha's relics according to the principle of Thàpàrahapuggala 4. (TM.(Thai) 10/206/153) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) This great Stupa passed down the legacy for future stupas in terms of value, belief and pattern of construction that would be built all over the world save for the finest arts put in those structures reflecting the local characteristics. For instance, several "Mahadhatu Chedi" (great Cetiya) were built in the Northern part of Thailand known as The Lanna Kingdom in the past that also displayed aspects of Lanna art.

Emperor Ashoka the Great sponsored The Third Buddhist Council in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the scriptures at The Ashokaram Temple. After that, he ordered nine missionary groups be deployed for the dissemination of Buddhism in other countries as recommended by Moggaliputtatissa. The Emperor himself conducted a pilgrimage to several sites involving the life of The Lord Buddha and major disciples; e.g., The Four Holy Places of Buddhism. There he ordered that a Stupa and the pillars of Ashoka be built for worship by the locals and to remind descendants that "These are significant and holy sites of The Lord Buddha." Thus, it can be assumed that the tradition of Cetiya construction was widely established during the time of Emperor Ashoka the Great. According to Buddhist scriptures, Emperor Ashoka the Great ordered that as many as 84,000 stupas be built all over India; for example in his life, namely, 218 years after the great decease of The Lord Buddha in Patna, The Emperor Ashoka the Great after having gone through many wars (especially at Kalinga Region) felt sorrowful of massive death of people. Having met Nikrodha Novice, he had faithfulness in him and felt more after listening to The Dhamma delivered by that Novice. He gave alms to 600,000 monks per day and ordered that the great temple be built up called Ashokaram (means no sorrow). Phra Inthakutta was assigned to oversee the construction and it took 3 years to complete this temple construction. In addition, The Emperor Ashoka the Great also ordered that another 84,000 smaller temples be built up with 84,000 Stupas all over India. (HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 2010)

Some researchers argue that those stupas were not constructed only in India, but in other places; such as, China and neighboring countries. The tradition of Cetiya construction was widely adopted in India during that time, and Emperor Ashoka the Great was later recognized as the advocate of the new age of Buddhism in which laypeople would similarly play an important role in the dissemination of Buddhism as a monk; such as, those living in The Lord Buddha's lifetime including King Bimbisara, King Pasenadi, the wealthy merchant Anathapindika, Visakha, etc. (UTM.(Thai) 10/206/153) (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996)

Building a Cetiya in India during the time of Emperor Ashoka the Great or later was not only intended to signify that that place was a "Buddhist site", but also to contain The Lord Buddha's or Arhant's relics for the purpose of paying homage by Buddhist laypeople who, apart from making a living, may not have enough time to listen to sermons or practice The Dhamma at

a temple but just only wanted to pay homage to nearby Cetiya before continuing to make a livelihood. More importantly, a Cetiya could be built anywhere and not only in the area of a Buddhist temple. Those who might have limited time, did not want to spend time at the temple, or disturb monks could pay homage and make merit at their own convenience. However, the pattern of a Cetiya once widely adopted by other parts of the world became diversified in shape and concept not to mention about the possibility of cultural exchanges in cultural networks resulting in the unique pattern of each locality. According to Prince Krom Phraya Narisara Nuwattiwong (2010), he stated that: "Cetiya construction derived from the original in ancient India where the structure was placed upon the grave or mound which then led to a bell-shaped Cetiya in the present date. Above the bell-shaped structure, there was a throne or platform covered with a tiered umbrella before there was more variety in its pattern in other territories in which Buddhism had been adopted."

The "**Sanchi Stupa**" located in Madhya Pradesh, India was considered an achievement for its authenticity and grandeur and also used as a model for subsequent constructions. This great Stupa also had influence on the belief, philosophy and construction pattern of other Stupas in different parts of the world. Cetiya construction derived from the original in ancient India where the structure was placed upon the grave or mound which then led to bell-shaped Cetiya in the present date. Above the bell-shaped structure, there had a throne or platform covered with tiered umbrella. The shape of a Cetiya was developed into several other shapes from region to region in which Theravada Buddhism was firmly established; such as, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Laos PDR, and Thailand in which the shape and elegance has been uniquely developed as a form of national identity. (HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 2015)

The bell-shaped Cetiya in Sri Lanka was developed based on the original Sanchi Stupa in India, which then had an influence on the design of Cetiya in Thailand that is sometimes called a Lanka-shaped Cetiya like that found in Nakhon Si Thammarat province. Local patterns were also added to the original construction design; such as, the Bagan pattern and Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar representing the model for the construction of Cetiya as a result of the integration of the Lanka pattern and local arts. Other examples can be seen at Wat Mahathat at Luang Prabang, Lao PDR., bell-shaped Borobudur in Indonesia, and The Mahayana Buddhism style in Vietnam and Singapore. The ancient Cetiya remains found in China were also similar to those built in India of the same period. This is proof that once Buddhism had been established in any country, a Cetiya would be built as a spiritual center of faith. (HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 2015)

Buddhist Philosophy found in Cetiya

The Buddhist who comes to pay homage to a Cetiya will first think of The Lord Buddha and then The Dhamma, which can be demonstrated in the form of the Cetiya. Having a thorough consideration of Cetiya patterns and details, we can interpret them in different ways. For instance,

the symbols found at Phra Dhatu in Nakhon Si Thammarat can be interpreted in Buddhist philosophy as follows: (HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 2015)

The Càga principle refers to sacrifice, that is, the construction of Cetiya requires sacrifice by the antecedent, who might have to renounce huge amounts of money and other properties. The principle of Katannukatavedità refers to the quality of being a grateful person who is thankful for any benefits received from the antecedent and who has respect in The Lord Buddha, The Dhamma and The Sangha and tries to reciprocate them.

The principle of unity requires solidarity and participation in order to make it possible to construct such a huge structure like a Cetiya. It has been told in some legends that it needed as many as 200 workmen per day and many years and over several reigns to complete a Cetiya.

The principle of Tilakkhana refers to The Three Characteristics of Being, also called The Common Characteristics, which no one can divert from. From the Cetiya point of view, once it has been erected, it stands for a certain period of time before gradually decaying by natural forces, and then needs repair periodically.

In terms of symbolic significance, the construction of Cetiya conveys certain elements of Buddhist philosophy. For instance, the round shaped base may refer to Samsàravatta or The Round of Existence or The Wheel of Rebirth, and the rectangular base refers to 4 Satipatthàna or The Four Foundations of Mindfulness in order to consider the cause of impurities. The second level of the rectangular base of Cetiya reminds us of the principle of Four Iddhipàda, while the middle part or body of the Cetiya refers to Four Magga and Four Phala to the person who has fully embraced Precepts, Jhàna (Four meditations) and Brahnavihàra (The Four Divine States of Mind). The top part of the Cetiya refers to The Attainment of Absolute Truth while the single apex refers to Nibbàna. The Four Apexes of a Cetiya can refer to Ariyasacca (The Four Noble Truths) or Ariyamagga (The Four Noble Paths) and Ariyaphala (The Four Noble Fruits). (Mungthanee, 2022)

Although Buddhist temples generally include a Cetiya as a significant part, The Cetiya can also be compared as Sumeru (Mount Meru), which is considered to be The Center of The Universe. It is surrounded by seven tiers of smaller mounts while The Four Great Continents are at the outermost extremities in The Four Cardinal Directions. This belief has had an influence on the construction of cities in Thailand, where the Cetiya in a Buddhist temple is marked as the center of the city.

With respect to the interpretation of the temple components, Cetiya can be compared to Sumeru (Mount Meru) while The Lord Buddha held the position superior to Indra, who was referred to in various scriptures, including The Tripitaka and its commentaries. Generally, Indra was referred to as "Śakra". This means that The Lord Buddha was superior to Cātummahārājikà, or The Four Guardian Deities, who were closest to human beings and were in charge of protecting The Four Directions of the world. The Cātummahārājikà declared themselves as Buddhists and were ready to protect Buddhism. (HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 2015)

Cetiya in ASEAN Countries

The countries within ASEAN that primarily follow Theravada Buddhism include Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and some parts of Malaysia. For Vietnam and Singapore, these countries believe in Mahayana Buddhism. Therefore, the countries with the same denomination will have a similar Cetiya design.

Cetiya in Thailand: Buddhism was brought to Thailand around B.E. 300 by Ven. Sona and Ven. Uttara, who created a Cetiya in Nakhon Prathom, which at that time was called The Twarawadee Kingdom. Phra Pathom Cetiya was created with an old design to resemble a monk's alms-bowl overturned, or an O-shape. It has a Pukchatsila bench on top, whose shape is similar to The Sanchi Stupa located in India. The body of Pathom Cetiya nowadays is found in the shape of an overturned bell with a sharp tip which is constructed to cover the old one. Phra Mahathat Cetiya in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Modern province, some 800 Kilometres at the South of Thailand) is a Stupa of Lanka Buddhism, which came to the country in B.E. 1800. Thai Buddhists who ordained in the country of Lanka (present day Sri Lanka) returned to establish a community at the city of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and then Later, King Sri Thammasokraja of Tamphornling Kingdom to build Phra Mahathat at Nakhon Si Thammarat, which is similar to the stupas in Sri Lanka covering the original pagoda in the year 1093 BC. The prestige of Lanka Buddhism was spreading to Sukothai where King Ruang's Dynasty was prominent. The Great King was admired so he invited Lanka Buddhism to be located in Sukothai. Thus, Lanka Buddhism has been largely followed since that time. The statement on a stone inscription by The Great King Ramkhamhang from around the 1800's. The Great King Ramkhamhang did give alms to Phra Mahaswami (Highest level monk in Sri Lanka) who graduated Tipitaka, the head of the kingdoms more than the great all the teachers in this city. Everyone rose from Nakhon Si Thammarat. (The Fine Arts Department, 1983)

It was in this period that Ramkhamhaeng the great king of Sukhothai sent messengers to invite the group of monks at the town of Nakhon Si Thammarat then known as the "Lankavamsa" monks to preach the doctrine at Sukhothai, promoting them every help and convenience. Since then, Lankavamsa or Lankavong Theravada Buddhism was well patronized by king Ramkhamhaeng. It finally superseded the existing previous beliefs. This has been further explained by Phra Dhammapitaka (P. A. Payutto) (1984) who stated that Theravada Buddhism of The Lankavamsa sect was first settled at Nakhon Si Thammarat and their fame soon reached Sukhothai. King Ram Khamhaeng (The third great king of Sukhothai Kingdom) then invited a dignitary called Phra Mahaswami (Highest level monk in Sri Lanka) to his capital and gave him royal support in propagating The Doctrine. After that The Theravada Buddhism of The Lankavamsa sect became popular and more and more widely practiced in Thailand. Therefore, Lanka Buddhism became more prominent as Mahayana Buddhism deteriorated and disappeared. The Cetiya in Nakhon Si Thammarat, that is the Lanka shaped Cetiya, has influenced the stupas in Siam and its surroundings. (Choovichian, 2010)

Cetiya in Myanmar: Shwedagon pagoda was built 2500 years ago, but historians and archeologists believe that it was built during 6th-10th Centuries by Mon. The myth has been told that there were two brothers who were merchants, named Taputsa and Panlika, from the Northern side of Signkuthara Hill. They met The Lord Buddha and he gave 8 pieces of hair to these two merchants, who came back to Myanmar and received help from a local ruler. The king reconstructed a Cetiya which was 40 meters in height in order to collect The Lord Buddha's hairs in the area of Signkuthara Hill. Later on, Shwedagon pagoda became the most famous place of pilgrimage and the most important sanctuary for Buddhism in Myanmar. Buddhism has been in this country for so long that normal people, rulers, and kings all believe in Buddhism as the mindset. Cetiya in Myanmar is a sign of the arts, architecture, and beliefs as it has turned into culture, tradition, political activity, and politics. They all use the Cetiya as their center. (Tingsunjalee, 2012)

Cetiya in Laos: Phra That Luang, or Loka Chedi, at Chulamanee is an important place in Sajjan Vientiane and the Laos People's Center across the country. According to legend, the capital has a history of a millennia in the same construction as Phra That Phanom in Thailand. Due to the myth, it seems to be associated with the history of the land on the right side of The Klong River. This place is considered an important symbol of Laos. It appears that the coat of arms of Laos is now a relic as the President uses it in the capital seal. Phra That Luang is the symbol which represents Buddhism. When coming to pay respect, it makes a remembrance of The Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. It also indicates that Laos has a long-unified strain of Buddhism and it's the center of the nation, religion, and monarchy. It is the source of many different arts and cultures which have been influenced by The Lord Buddha's teachings. (Phramaha Daosiam Vachirapanyo, 2012)

Cetiya in Cambodia: Wat Phnom, or Wat Phnom Gon Penh, is a Buddhist temple in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It was constructed in B.E. 1372 as a 27 meter-high Cetiya, or 88.5 feet from the ground level. This was the highest construction in the city then as Phraya Yat gave it a name, Wat Preah Chedey Borapaut, and it still occupies the center of Phnompenh. However, Cetiya usually indicates the sacrifice of ancestors and money. Every detail shows that our ancestors were very calm and mindful with their precepts, meditation, and wisdom. They all did good things, as demonstrated by the construction, which is highly stable. With Buddhism they created something enormous, elegant and neat for other people. (Ksabinlasing, 2013)

Cetiya in Indonesia: Borobudur, as Thai people know, is a famous attraction in Indonesia. It's located in the middle area of Java Island near Magelang, Jakarta is around 40 kilometers to the Northwest. It was constructed during B.E. 1293-1393 as a sanctuary of Mahayana Buddhism. If not including Nakhon Wat in Cambodia, which is a place of Hinduism and Buddhism, Burobodur is the biggest sanctuary of Buddhism in the world. (Ksabinlasing, 2013)

Cetiya in Viet Nam: Chua Tran Quoc is located near West Lake which is the largest lake in Hanoi. This Cetiya is the oldest one in Vietnam. It is a pink pagoda that rises up in layers like a

Japanese Pagoda. Each floor has a white Buddha image enshrined in the space around the pagoda and it contains the relics of the temple's abbots. (Phramaha Daosiam Vachirapanyo, 2012)

Therefore, every country in ASEAN which believes in Buddhism has a Cetiya (Stupa) as a center for Buddhists. They represent the stability of Buddhism in each country, as well as the culture, tradition, and arts which are influenced by Buddhism, so that they have become learning places and a place where people come to pay respect.

Cetiya as Communication of Buddhist Culture and Philosophy

Cetiya is an indicator of awareness and understanding as well as a link of the places which collect the relics of Buddha and as respected places for paying respect for Buddhists. Generally speaking, these places act as learning centers for Thai tourists and foreigners; for example, Shwadagon pagoda in Myanmar is a place where many people come to pay respect every year. Myanmar Buddhists also pay respect, as it's a part of their daily lives and it is the center of their Nation. Cetiya have a long history. The first Cetiya was Sanchi Stupa in India. Emperor Ashoka the Great had constructed it with 18 Wa, 2 Sork to collect relics and be a center of Buddhism. As time passed, the Cetiya deteriorated many times. However, many believers in India reconstructed it in ancient Indian patterns, developing from a mound above a grave to becoming the bell shape that's seen at present times. Above the bell part, there is a structure standing for the bench part, or Buddha's bench, which is covered by a multi-tiered umbrella. Later on, there were other kinds of patterns of Cetiya that were adapted in other regions where The Theravada Sect of Buddhism resides, such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mon, Laos, and Thailand. There has been a development of the arts which became unique in each country. (Leksukhum, 1995)

Cetiya are significant for The Nation, monarchy, and religion, along with signifying the center of a nations, and they are a symbol of Dhamma learning for Buddhists, especially for creating faith and inspiration in the founders who wanted to know The Dhamma of Buddhism. Also, Cetiya represents the arts, elegance and architecture. Cetiya signifies the faith of kings from past till present, and their respect for Buddhism. It signifies the center of The Nation. Therefore, the elegance and enormity of Cetiya makes wise men think deeply that this place was built by faithful, meritorious men who intended to build it with their whole heart. It represents the unity they had in order to make it successfully. (Phya Anuman Rajadhan, 1960)

To visit a Cetiya is one way to recognize The Lord Buddha and his Dhamma, be aware with mindfulness and think positively, because doing merit will create a beautiful life. As well, constructing a Cetiya shows that the constructors were full of sacrifice without thinking about how difficult the construction would be. Nevertheless, when it's done, its beauty shows to the visitors. Thus, Cetiya signifies the awareness of humans thinking, about the merit of the builders, and the goodness that will permanently stay with humankind.

Hence, Cetiya are representative of the kindness of Lord Buddha toward humanity and significantly shows goodness and virtue. Cetiya are attractive for Thai and foreigners alike to come and visit, letting them know the history and Buddhism even more. For those who are still

unfaithful, it will increase respect. For those who are faithful, they will become even more faithful to Buddhism because they see the sign of this enormous respected place. This is an important part that will help stimulate humans' minds, to see how amazing it is, and become respectful. The pattern of construction of a Cetiya implies the philosophy of Dhamma, such as transmigration, karma, consciousness, The Four Noble Truths, The Noble Eightfold Path, and Nirvana. However, it depends on the designers whether they imply which parts of philosophy of Dhamma, and then imagine it during the construction due to their pattern. At present, using news for Public Relation (PR) indicates other different aspects of Cetiya, but the premise of giving knowledge and being a sanctuary of Buddhism is still the same from generation to generation. In addition, they also use high technology to communicate, such as radio, television, newspaper or Internet, but that is still in a small scope. Public relation (PR) of annual festivals or other activities will inform people, but just only the activity's announcement. (Wickramasinghe, 1997)

Cetiya is a cultural media that makes people understand, and how the symbol was supposed to be used for social activities and the public, which was related to the group of humans using whichever symbols in order to communicate among the group and creates the truth due to their pattern by making them respect, believe, and have disposition to practically follow in whatever ways.

The communication principle of Cetiya is the communication channel that when people look at it, they will think about Lord Buddha who established Buddhism, Dhamma or The Philosophy that reflects through The Cetiya, and The Buddha who inherited doctrines for missionaries today. So, the meaning of Cetiya is more than itself. If looking at a Cetiya and considering deeply, that person will see what is secretly inside the Cetiya. For example, how could they build this gigantic Cetiya?, How many people did they use?, How much money did they spend?, How long did it take?, How difficult was it? What were their obstacles? And so on. That is, the more you think, the more you would like to know.

Conclusions

Cetiya is a construction for collecting the relics of Lord Buddha, Noble disciples, religious relics or even the bones of ancestors and important people. To build a Cetiya, and the attitude toward it, is a tradition which is continuously inherited. Moreover, there is the belief that those who respect Cetiya will have goodness in their life. It created unity in the community during The Great King to foster the continuous construction of Cetiya. This is the role of Buddhists, to preserve Buddhism, and it is the duty of the King to protect the country peacefully by using religion to create peacefulness and stability. In the aspect of the art of Cetiya, it includes many types of arts. Some pieces became the model of arts for the next era and have their own uniqueness specifically in their time, such as The Sanchi Stupa in India in the era of Emperor Ashoka the Great. Its uniqueness developed into new designs in the next era in India, Sri Lanka, and the countries in ASEAN. Therefore, Cetiya is a place for transferring faithfulness, respect, and, belief towards the person who did merit to all humans, known as Lord Buddha. The meaning is meant to send the

message to the next generation. Stupa or Cetiya is a symbol of communication, which has the role of inheriting The Dhamma and philosophy principles representing the sanctuary of Buddhism.

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