



DHARMA PRINCIPLES BASE ON BELIEF AND RITUAL WITH AROGAYASALA (PRASAT CHANG PI) IN SIKHORAPHUM DISTRICT, SURIN PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

Background and objectives: Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) in Chang Pi Village, Thailand, had a historical context rooted in Khmer culture and Buddhism. It was associated with healing beliefs and rituals, reflecting values of spirituality, compassion, and communal unity. These beliefs and rituals aligned with Dharma principles, emphasizing interconnectedness and mutual support, ultimately strengthening community bonds. This research aimed to explore the historical context of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) and investigate how its belief system and ritual practices aligned with Dharma principles and Buddhist tenets in Chang Pi Village, Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand.

Methodology: This qualitative research employed in-depth interviews and participatory observation to investigate beliefs and rituals associated with Arogayasala in Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand. Six interviews with community leaders and ritual conductors were conducted. Content analysis techniques were applied to the collected data. Descriptive analysis was employed. Data quality was ensured through triangulation, classification, categorization, theming, and interpretation techniques.

Main Results: Arogayasala held historical significance, rooted beliefs, and impactful rituals for the Khmer community in Chang Pi Village. Dating back to the 18th century of the Buddhist Era, it reflected King Jayavarman VII's dedication to healing. The belief system brought unity and prosperity through unwavering faith in unseen powers, observed in an annual ritual with guardian spirits. Arogayasala, with roots dating back to the 18th century of the Buddhist Era, held historical importance for the Khmer community in Chang Pi Village, reflecting King Jayavarman VII's commitment to healing. Its belief system fostered unity and prosperity through unwavering faith in unseen powers. It manifested in an annual ritual involving guardian spirits of Arogayasala in Chang Pi Village, which stood as a testament to historical significance, deep-rooted beliefs, and transformative rituals that had profoundly impacted the Khmer community. Established around the 18th century of the Buddhist Era, it reflected



King Jayavarman VII's dedication to healing. Archaeological evidence could have supported its role as a haven of protection and wellness. The belief system surrounding Arogayasala served as a pillar of unity and prosperity, rooted in unwavering faith in unseen powers. Annual rituals seamlessly intertwined religion and superstition, offering solace and protection that passed down through generations. These practices fostered unity, preserved traditions, and enhanced personal growth. Arogayasala's belief system harmonized with Dharma principles, reflecting unity, selflessness, and consistent commitment, embodying a timeless legacy within the Thai-Khmer community.

Involvement to Buddhadhamma: This research highlights the significance of belief systems and rituals associated with Arogayasala in Surin Province's historical sites. The inherent advantages and values lie in their capacity to foster community connections, solidarity, and unity, promoting harmony. The community's principles, encapsulated in their beliefs and rituals, include four Dharma principles: *Dāna* (Giving), *Piyavācā* (Kind Speech), *Atthacariyā* (Assistance for Benefit), and *Samānattatā* (Unity and Consistency).

Conclusions: Arogayasala's significance extended beyond history, embodying values such as comfort, tradition preservation, personal growth, and community unity. Its rituals seamlessly blended religion and superstition, providing solace and protection. Adherence to respectful practices, handed down through generations, not only preserved tradition but also fostered unity and countered negativity. Established in Chang Pi Village during the 18th century of the Buddhist Era, Arogayasala reflected King Jayavarman VII's commitment to healing, serving as a beacon of cultural heritage, spirituality, and shared purpose within the Thai-Khmer community.

Keywords: Dharma Principles, Belief, Ritual, Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi), Surin Province

Introduction

In Thailand, numerous multiethnic groups peacefully coexist, each with its own unique traditions, culture, beliefs, rituals, clothing, and cuisine. These diverse groups also exhibit distinct ways of life, deeply rooted in traditional ideologies that have been passed down through generations. One such community is Chang Pi Village, located in the northeastern region of Thailand and predominantly known as Thai-Khmer in Surin Province. Surin Province's proximity to the Kingdom of Cambodia has led the Thai-Khmer people in Chang Pi Village to adopt cultural and belief influences from Cambodia, including a ritualistic belief system and the use of the Khmer language as their dialect.

The centerpiece of their traditional and local rituals is the worship of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi), an ancient site of great significance. This ritual, imbued with centuries of folklore and ideology, is performed annually through offerings and sacrifices, as a way to pay homage and seek blessings from the supernatural powers believed to be present in the natural environment (Phra Tienwit Attasanto (Ochawat), 2005). The community firmly believes in the profound impact of these powers on their lives, making the worship and sanctification of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) an integral part of their cultural heritage.

The purpose of this ritual is to bestow fertility upon their crops and prosperity upon their lives. However, undertaking this sacred rite is not simple task. Prior to the ritual's commencement, the

village community diligently prepares and cleans the site, gathering various offerings and sacrifices such as bananas, flowers, and other essentials necessary for the worship. The ceremony is carefully orchestrated, with its timing synchronized to the arrival of the planting season each year. In essence, the Thai-Khmer community in Chang Pi Village embraces their ancestral traditions, intertwining their distinct identity with the cultural influences they have inherited from Cambodia (Sumetharat, 2010). Their deep-rooted beliefs and reverence for the supernatural powers surrounding Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) continue to shape and enrich their way of life, fostering a sense of unity and spirituality among the people of this unique region.

This research is necessary to document and understand the cultural, social, and spiritual aspects of the Thai-Khmer community in Chang Pi Village. It contributes to academic knowledge, preserves cultural heritage, and helps us appreciate the diversity and interplay of traditions within Thailand.

Objectives

This research aimed to explore the historical context of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) and investigate how its belief system and ritual practices aligned with Dharma principles and Buddhist tenets in Chang Pi Village, Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand.

Methodology

In this qualitative research, a combination of methods, including in-depth interviews and participatory observation, was employed with a diverse set of participants to thoroughly investigate the beliefs and rituals linked to Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) in Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand. The study drew data from six interviews with community leaders, ritual conductors, and key informants from the Arogayasala area and utilized content analysis techniques. The primary data collected by the researchers were subjected to descriptive analysis (DA) according to the methodology outlined by Supang Chanthawanit in 2007 (Chanthawanit, 2007). The research also assessed data quality through triangulation, classification, categorization, theming, and interpretation techniques, as outlined by Yoddamnoen et al. (1994). A comprehensive framework that mapped the intricate connections between research techniques, methods, and objectives was depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 A comprehensive framework that mapped the intricate connections between research techniques, methods, and objectives.

OBJECTIVES	SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION	ANALYSIS	CONCLUSION
Historical context, associated beliefs, and rituals of Arogayasala	(6 key informants) 1	- In-depth-interview	Content Analysis	Descriptive Analysis
Advantages, Values and local significance of belief system and rituals at Arogayasala	community leader, 2 ritual	- Observation		
Arogayasala's belief system and ritual practices in light of Dharma principles	conductors 3 elderlies			



Results and Discussion

Historical context, associated beliefs, and rituals of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi).

Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) boasted a captivating history. This sacred site was established in Chang Pi Village, Village No.1, Chang Pi Sub-district, Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand, and held great significance as a Mahayana Buddhist religious location. The structure was crafted using laterite and sandstone, featuring a rectangular plan with a distinctive eastward orientation. Archaeologists concluded that these ruins were constructed around the 18th century of the Buddhist Era. The Arogayasala complex at this site consisted of a main castle, a low wall surrounding the hall, an arched entrance, and an ancient pond. This ruin served as a hospital chapel and was one of the 122 establishments initiated by Phra Jao Jayavarman VII, the esteemed former Khmer King of the Khmer Kingdom. During his reign from 1181 to 1218 CE, Phra Jao Jayavarman VII held the throne of the Khmer Kingdom. Historical evidence found in the inscription of Prasat Taprom in Cambodia shed light on the ritual worship of Prasat Chang Pi (Chiang Pey) and the primary objective behind constructing Arogayasala Prasat Taprom in Phra-Nakorn City, Cambodia. The inscription's prosodic paragraph 117 provided valuable information, stating that a total of 102 Arogayasalas were constructed throughout all provinces in the Khmer Kingdom, which could be famously known as Cambodia. These Arogayasalas were part of King Jayavarman VII's noble efforts to establish sacred spaces dedicated to the well-being and healing of his people.

The inscription provided clear evidence of the profound sense of duty and responsibility that King Jayavarman VII held toward the happiness and well-being of his people (Coede, 1993). The poetry and literature inscribed on the second side of the inscription (Verses 1-6) underscored the great king's heartfelt concern upon learning about the sickness and afflictions faced by his subjects. This news had caused him both physical and mental distress. In response to his people's suffering, King Jayavarman VII took decisive action. He issued orders to summon skilled and knowledgeable physicians to provide the best possible medical care and treatments, aiming to help his people recover from their illnesses and ailments. Additionally, he embarked on a mission to construct numerous hospitals, creating dedicated spaces for healing and wellness. Symbolizing prosperity and well-being, King Jayavarman VII also had Bodhisattva statues of Bhaiṣajyagurusucata, along with statues of Phra Chinorot, erected around the hospitals. These statues served as powerful emblems of hope and abundance for the people. Furthermore, the king had Bodhisattva statues of Sukot and Virochanachina, known as sanctuary statues, built to protect the people from diseases and safeguard their health.

This showcased King Jayavarman VII's unwavering dedication to the welfare and protection of his subjects as he sought to alleviate their suffering and ensure their well-being through these remarkable initiatives. Similarly, the literature poetry inscribed on the fourth side also revealed King Jayavarman VII's deep desire to bring happiness and good health to all his people. He expressed his wish as if he were personally aiding each individual to escape from the perils of sinking into an ocean of suffering. The recorded message in this inscription further underscored King Jayavarman VII's strong commitment to constructing Arogayasalas for the explicit purpose of curing and treating his people



from all forms of suffering and diseases. His noble affirmation reflected his genuine concern for the well-being and welfare of his subjects (Kaewklai, 2001). The context and architecture of Arogayasala, the site of Prasat Chang Pi, which held historical significance, along with the associated beliefs and rituals of Prasat Chang Pi was depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1 The context and architecture of Arogayasala, the site of Prasat Chang Pi, which held historical significance, along with the associated beliefs and rituals of Prasat Chang Pi.

Belief associated with Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi).

The Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) was deeply intertwined with the beliefs and rituals of the Khmer community in Chang Pi Village, Sikhorphum District, Surin Province, Thailand. This sacred site held immense significance for them, as it fostered a sense of unity within society, the environment, and their relationships, promoting mutual interdependence. The Khmer people of the community, located in Chang Pi Village, had a profound and unwavering faith in Arogayasala (Manitjarern, 1971). Their conviction in its sanctity and holiness was unshakable, stemming from a deep-seated devotion and awareness of Arogayasala (Punnotok, 1985). Their allegiance was deeply rooted in cultural beliefs, as they held that numerous divine and protective spirits, functioning as guardian deities and healing entities, blessed Arogayasala, granting abundance, prosperity, and happiness (Royal Institution, 2003).

Archaeological excavations yielded significant findings, including a multitude of revered images and idols. Notable figures among them were Phra Awalokitesuan, Bodhisattva, Phra Bhaishajyaguru vaidurya prabhasa, and the revered Shiva Buddha. These sacred images were regarded as wise healers, capable of treating the afflicted. Additionally, artifacts representing Brahmin-Hinduism and goddesses, such as Ganesha and the base of Shiva Shrine, as well as ceremonial bronze and silverware, had been unearthed. A stone base, utilized for grinding medicinal substances for patient treatment, further attested to the site's historical role as a healing center.



Arogayasala, often referred to as the "Chapel of the hospital", might have served as a sanctuary for curing and treating patients since ancient times. Its interior was adorned with ornate depictions of revered images and idols from both the Buddhist and Brahmin-Hindu traditions. Touching these images and offering prayers for good health and well-being was believed to bring fulfillment and contentment. Consequently, the Chang Pi community frequented this revered location to engage in chants and prayers, driven by their unwavering faith in these images. The annual ritual held to honor Arogayasala involved the offering of sacrifices by the Chang Pi villagers, who sought blessings for rice fertility, plant growth, and favorable weather patterns. This time-honored tradition had been passed down through generations. In preparation for the ritual, a variety of offerings, including fruits, flowers, and banana trees, were meticulously readied to be presented on the appointed day, accompanied by a multitude of participants (Khearam, 1992).

Rituals associated with Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi).

The ritual belief associated with worshipping Arogayasala had become deeply embedded in the community's reverence for the potent spiritual forces it embodied. The people in its vicinity wholeheartedly believed that through their devotion, they could have attained prosperity and happiness, driven by the potent synergy of unseen powers and religious dedication. The belief system associated with Arogayasala encompassed two distinct objectives: Life rituals and auspicious rituals. The life ritual entailed worship for the betterment of one's existence, involving offerings and sacrifices to seek happiness, good health, and protection from malevolent forces. Conversely, the auspicious ritual centers around performing virtuous acts during special religious occasions, aimed at the well-being of oneself, family, friends, and loved ones, such as housewarming or wedding ceremonies. The devotion observed at Arogayasala was a fusion of religious practices and superstitions, blending diverse spiritual beliefs with traditional and cultural customs. Practitioners diligently followed the various stages of the ritual, adhering to respectful attire and speech. They displayed the utmost reverence for the sacred site, refraining from any form of disrespect. A pivotal facet of this practice involved upholding promises made to the sanctuary after one's desires were fulfilled (Lawrence, 1999). Neglecting this commitment might have yielded unforeseen consequences, whether favorable or unfavorable. The ritual belief in worshipping Arogayasala had been transmitted through generations, rooted in the community's unwavering faith in the sanctuary's supernatural influence (Sergeant, 1999). The community firmly held that offerings and sacrifices made at this sacred site could have ushered opulence, prosperity, affluence, and happiness. Their belief in unseen powers converged with their religious convictions, forming a central wellspring of inspiration (Royal Institution, 2003).

The annual worship at Arogayasala encompassed two primary objectives. Firstly, it was designed to transform unfavorable circumstances, ushering happiness and longevity into the lives of the participants. Additionally, those who engaged in the annual worship firmly believed that this ritual had the power to ward off evils, wickedness, and ominous omens. The community's second objective in this worship practice was to seek prosperity, happiness, fortune, power, and good health, both for themselves and their community. The belief in this ritual was deeply ingrained in the human experience, interwoven with inspiration drawn from spirits, angels, and sacred entities (Veawweerakubta, 1993).



When faced with uncertainty and a lack of understanding, individuals found solace in the notion of revered divinities and spiritual entities, significantly shaping their way of life. The enigmatic power they perceived was both captivating and formidable, prompting them to actively seek ways to secure well-being and happiness for themselves and their families (Chittham, 1975). A similar perspective was shared by Manee Payormyong, who asserted that human beliefs were rooted in inexplicable, supernatural occurrences. In the absence of definitive answers, people embraced and maintained faith in the influence of revered divinities and spiritual entities (Payormyong, 1986). Consequently, they engaged in worship, offering sacrifices and prayers to these entities, as they believed it was the most effective means of addressing challenges and fulfilling their aspirations. The ritual worship of Arogayasala might have been passed down through generations and meticulously organized, based on the prevailing beliefs within Chang Pi Village and its surrounding community. It served to elevate their lives both physically and mentally, providing encouragement and auspicious influence. Furthermore, the ritual was perceived as a protective measure against malevolent forces and wicked influences, instilling a profound sense of security and well-being. Figure 2 might have depicted the context of the ritual worship of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi), the site housing Prasat Chang Pi, and the associated beliefs and rituals.



Figure 2 The context of the ritual worship of Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi), the site housing Prasat Chang Pi, and the associated beliefs and rituals.

Advantages, Values and Local significance of belief system and rituals at Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi).

The study revealed several advantages associated with the worship of Arogayasala. Comfort, Encouragement, and Hope: Those who attended the annual ritual worship of Arogayasala Prasat Chang Pi, held on the 1st day of the 6th waxing moon before the planting season, experienced a sense of comfort, freedom from worries, and renewed encouragement to face life's challenges. By participating in the worship, they expressed their hopes for fertility and prosperity in their crops, personal lives, and the well-being of their family and community members. Longevity and Protection: Worshiping at Arogayasala Prasat Chang Pi was believed to extend one's lifespan and safeguard against dangers and



obstacles. This spiritual practice instilled a sense of security and protection among the worshipers. Cultural and Traditional Preservation: The ritual served as a crucial means of conserving the cultural and traditional heritage passed down from ancient times to future generations. Young teenagers, witnessing and participating in the ritual, gained valuable insights into the historical background of this rich culture and tradition. The process of learning and engaging in the ritual fostered a sense of responsibility in preserving and developing this practice for the community and the nation as a whole. By cherishing and conserving the ancestral ritual worship, the community in Chang Pi Village maintained its vital identity, characterized by shared beliefs, culture, tradition, and ethnicity.

The strong socio-cultural context in the community reinforced the collective belief system and strengthened the common base of identity. The shared relationship ideas, which symbolized the culture and tradition inherited from ancient ancestors, further solidified the belief in the ritual among the people. This sense of shared heritage and identity contributed to the continued practice and significance of the Arogayasala worship in the lives of the Thai-Khmer community in Chang Pi Village, fostering a deep connection to their cultural roots and the sacred history of their ancestors (Howard, 1992). Figure 3 might have illustrated the ritual worship, depicting their collective engagement in rituals and the act of making offerings, symbolizing unity and solidarity.



Figure 3 The context of the ritual worship at Arogayasala, which was overseen by community leaders and villagers who shared a common sacred belief in Prasat Chang Pi.

The values of practice in the ritual worship of Arogayasala yielded several significant findings, reflecting the profound impact of this tradition on individuals, society, and the community as a whole:

Value to oneself: The worshipers who participated in the ritual experienced a heightened sense of mental strength and self-confidence, enabling them to lead happier lives within society. They also gained a deeper appreciation for the value of materials, cultivation, and the immense contributions of their parents in giving them life.

Value to their society: The ritual fostered a shared view, common needs, and a mutual understanding of the objectives of this worship, promoting a powerful sense of unity and harmony



within the community. It also encouraged the exploration and appreciation of religious culture, local traditions, and beliefs, contributing to the development of a unique community identity.

Value to be accepted and conserved by the community and others: The Arogayasala ritual was exclusive to the Chang Pi Village community in Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand. It was revered and accepted by other communities and visitors who attended and witnessed the ritual. The ritual's significance extended beyond the practice itself, encompassing its conceptual beliefs related to wishes for fertility, prosperity, and happiness.

Value to the unity of family and community: The ritual served as a focal point that brought all family members and community residents together. During the organization and preparation of the ritual, everyone actively participated, working tirelessly until its completion, exemplifying the strength of unity within the community.

Value of spending time with family members: In today's fast-paced society, opportunities for family members to spend time together might have diminished. However, the Arogayasala ritual became a significant occasion for individuals from different places to reunite with their families. Many people made an annual pilgrimage with their families to partake in this ritual, believing that their joint participation would lead to the eternal fulfillment of their wishes.

Value to aged people: An important objective of the ritual was to pay homage to ancestors who had passed away long ago. This act of making merit honored their souls and demonstrated gratitude to the elderly members of the community, such as parents, relatives, or village leaders, who, in turn, bestowed their good wishes upon future generations.

Arogayasala's belief system and ritual practices in light of Dharma principles.

The annual worship rituals organized by the Chang Pi community reflect the four Sangahavatthu principles, which were:

Dāna (Giving): The community demonstrated the principle of giving by making offerings, sacrifices, and sharing resources. Through the analysis of the merit-making activities, it became apparent that the community collectively contributed to support the monks and organize the annual ritual. This act of giving and sacrificing was a symbol of unity and selflessness within the community.

Piyavācā (Kind Speech): The ritual participants upheld the principle of using kind and beautiful words in their interactions. Throughout the various stages of the ceremony, people behaved with respect and refrained from using vulgar language. This practice had been observed since ancient times and was considered a customary rule, fostering a culture of mutual respect and harmonious communication.

Atthacariyā (Assistance for Benefit): The community engaged in acts of assistance and benefit for others. Through donations and the opening of the almshouse, food was distributed to participants and the less fortunate. Additionally, there were activities aimed at enhancing knowledge about local wisdom heritage, organized by academics and students who appreciated the value of preserving ancient beliefs and rituals in the community.



Samānattatā (Unity and Consistency): The beliefs and annual rituals fostered unity and consistency within the community. The practice of this ritual created a sense of compatibility, making the community like a supportive friend in times of both suffering and happiness. The community members treated each other with respect and equality, exemplifying a source of friendship and mutual assistance. In times of trouble, they stood by one another, reinforcing the bonds of happiness and unity within the group.

In conclusion, Arogayasala's historical significance had a deep-rooted belief system and the transformative impact of its rituals on the community. The site stood as a symbol of cultural heritage, spirituality, and communal unity. Historical Context: Arogayasala, established around the 18th century of the Buddhist Era in Chang Pi Village, reflected King Jayavarman VII's commitment to healing and well-being. Archaeological findings underscored its role as a place of protection and wellness. Belief System: Arogayasala's deep ties to the Khmer community were rooted in unwavering faith, symbolizing unity and prosperity. Guardian spirits and revered images contributed to an annual ritual that embodied their strong belief in unseen powers. Ritual Practices: Arogayasala's rituals merged religion and superstition, offering comfort, encouragement, and protection. Participants upheld respect and adherence, passing down the practice through generations. The ritual fostered unity and guarded against malevolent forces.

The belief system and rituals practiced at Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) held multifaceted advantages and values that profoundly impacted individuals, society, and the community. Through the annual worship, participants found comfort, encouragement, and hope, bolstered by a sense of security, longevity, and protection. This cultural practice served as a vital vessel for preserving and passing down traditions to future generations, fostering a deep connection to heritage. The collective belief system, strengthened by socio-cultural context, contributed to unity and shared identity. The ritual's values extended to personal growth, community unity, and family bonding, while also honoring ancestors and paying tribute to the elderly. The findings of this research aligned with some studies on the belief in communication ceremonies with spirits. This study emphasized coexistence and societal control for peace, emphasizing adherence to established social rules to mitigate conflicts. The glamor ritual of the Thai-Kui people was shown to function as a tool for government and social control, addressing societal pressures and conflicts (Chantong, 1994). The belief system and rituals of Arogayasala enriched the lives of the Thai-Khmer community in Chang Pi Village, reinforcing their cultural roots and fostering a sense of purpose and unity (Kasemsukjarasseang, 1983).

Arogayasala's belief and ritual in light of Dharma principles, in conclusion, Arogayasala's belief system and ritual practices harmoniously aligned with the core principles of Dharma. The Chang Pi community's annual worship rituals exemplified **Dāna** (Giving), **Piyavācā** (Kind Speech), **Atthacariyā** (Assistance for Benefit), and **Samānattatā** (Unity and Consistency). The findings of this research aligned with the work of one research. The study analyzing the Ma-mot doctrine of the Thai-Khmer ethnic group in Surin Province and Buriram Province indicated that the ritual exemplified the Dharma of social coexistence through the act of giving (**Dāna**) (Phra Tienwit Attasanto (Ochawat), 2005).

This meritorious practice involved generosity and reflected symbolic meanings that humans attributed to life and rituals, embodying notions of goodness and abstract values (Geertz, 1973). These practices embodied unity, selflessness, respectful communication, assistance, and communal bonding, reflecting the essence of Dharma principles within the community.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

This finding indicates the vital role of Arogayasala's belief systems and rituals in fostering community unity and harmony in Surin Province's historical sites. It is rooted in four Dharma principles, including *Dāna* (Giving), *Piyavācā* (Kind Speech), *Atthacariyā* (Assistance for Benefit), and *Samānattatā* (Unity and Consistency). These practices embody values that strengthen community bonds. The components of Dharma principles based on belief and ritual associated with Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) in Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand, are indicated in Figure 4.

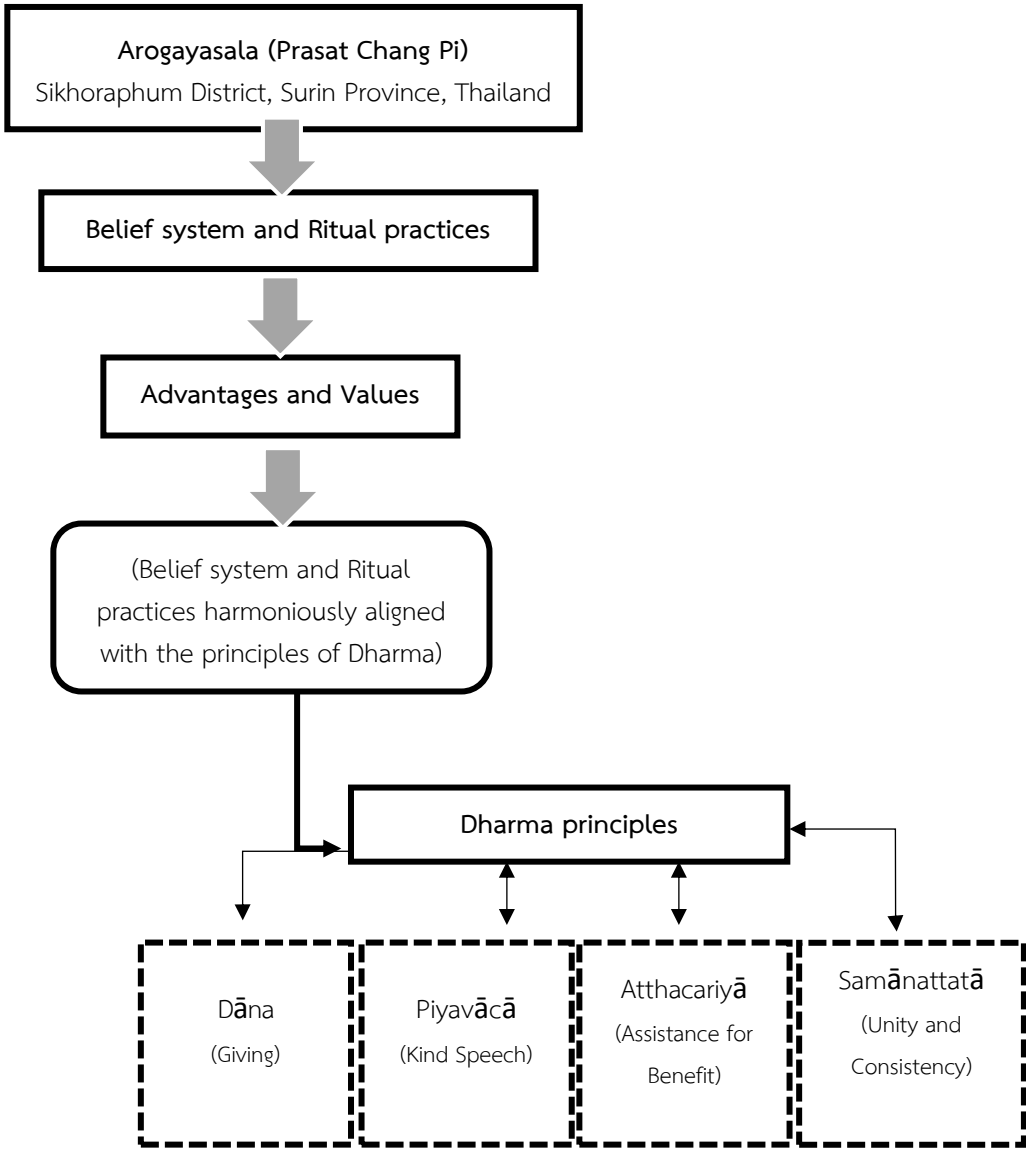


Figure 4 The components of Dharma principles based on belief and ritual associated with Arogayasala (Prasat Chang Pi) in Sikhoraphum District, Surin Province, Thailand.



Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, Arogayasala stood as a testament to historical significance, deep-rooted beliefs, and transformative rituals that profoundly impacted the Khmer community in Chang Pi Village. Established around the 18th century of the Buddhist Era, Arogayasala reflected King Jayavarman VII's dedication to healing and well-being. Archaeological evidence reinforced its role as a haven of protection and wellness. The belief system surrounding Arogayasala was a pillar of unity and prosperity, fueled by unwavering faith in unseen powers. Guardian spirits and revered images were integral to an annual ritual that encapsulated this strong belief. These rituals seamlessly intertwined religion and superstition, offering solace, encouragement, and protection. Participants adhered to respectful practices, passing down this tradition through generations and fostering unity while safeguarding against malevolent forces. The values and significance of Arogayasala's belief system and rituals were manifold. Through annual worship, individuals found comfort and hope, while the cultural practice preserved traditions for future generations, solidifying a shared identity. This collective belief system enhanced personal growth, community unity, and family bonds, while also paying homage to ancestors and the elderly. Ultimately, Arogayasala's belief system and rituals harmonized seamlessly with the core principles of Dharma, reflecting unity, selflessness, assistance, and consistent commitment within the community. This cultural cornerstone, with its historical, spiritual, and communal dimensions, stood as a beacon of cultural heritage, spirituality, and shared purpose within the Thai-Khmer community, embodying the essence of a timeless legacy.

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