

Abstract

This study is an examination of the controversial Santi Asoke Buddhist movement, located in Thailand. The objectives of this paper are: (1) to analyze the environmental, spiritual and social contributions of the Santi Asoke community. Spiritual contributions in this context represent the daily Buddhist practice of both laity and monastic members. (2) The second objective is to determine to what extent these practices are congruent with a *practical* application of Buddhist principles, specifically those found within the doctrine of Dependent Origination or *Paticca-samuppàda*. The emphasis upon a practical approach primarily concerns an interpretation of this doctrine, as it functions in the present. This perspective, which is in contrast to the traditional model of transmigration, or rounds of the past, present and future, recognizes the human potential in terms of our behavior in the *suffering present*. Proper living and *contact* with the present, through an engaged and interconnected relationship with the environment, is believed to be both, meritorious and universally beneficial.

We will discover that this community adheres to principles that deeply consider the interconnected role and universal responsibility of the individual Buddhist as beneficial to all living things, attempted through a simple, yet sophisticated system of sustainable organic agriculture, anti consumerism, alternative education, alternative energy, herbal organic healthcare, and waste management.