
INDIVIDUAL ENLIGHTENMENT AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HOLY MONK KHRUBA BOONCHUM

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ABSTRACT

This paper will assess some sociological interpretations of Theravada Buddhism and Holy Monks which rely on such concepts as charisma, millenarianism and utopianism. In the past, sociologists like Weber and Murti misinterpreted Buddhism as focusing upon individual enlightenment rather than the welfare of society. But these interpretations of Theravāda Buddhism overlook that the Buddhist concept of enlightenment has a deep relationship with social development and social responsibilities. Buddhism has a highly developed sociological basis and need to be understood in its own terms. The practice of Buddhist monks should be understood by means of Buddhist sociology. To illustrate this, this paper will discuss the Theravāda Buddhist concept of the ten perfections (pāramī) in general and perfection of morality (sīla-pāramī) in particular. This will also be illustrated by Buddhist tale of Bhuridatta-Jātaka and the case of Spiritual Master, the Most Venerable Khruba Boonchum, Nyanasamvaro.

Keywords: Buddhism, Buddhist Sociology, Holy Monks, Khruba Boonchum

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