



ANALYZING THE ETHICAL VALUES FOUND IN THE BUDDHIST ARTS

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Received: August 15, 2024; **Revised:** August 22, 2024; **Accepted:** November 4, 2024

Abstract

The research article “Analysis of ethical values appearing in Buddhist Art” has the objective: Of studying Buddhist art that appears in Theravada Buddhism. To study the ethics that appear in Buddhist art and analyze the ethical values that appear in it. The researcher has established a research method. Qualitative Research uses analytical research on the Maha Chedi of Bodh Gaya and the Buddhist relics, by researching from documents (Documentary Investigation). The results of the study found that: 1) Analysis of the study of Buddhist art appearing in Theravada Buddhism found that the Lord Buddha was still alive. There has not yet been clear evidence that Was there any Buddhist art created. The only Buddhist art that was influenced by Buddhist teachings is architecture. Buddhist art is all about beauty. Captivating the mind to create a fascination with faith that is a medium to access goodness and truth. It inspires faith in good things.





Bow your heart to achieve peace. The power of mental stability arises. 2) Analysis of the study of ethics appearing in Buddhist art found that 1) Buddhist art has become part of culture From the Buddhist method to the Buddhist way, which is an important basis of Thai society that has its roots in Buddhism, whether it be traditions, maxims, beliefs, even the temperament of Thai people, their role is based on morality. 2) Buddhist arts Interpretation of Theravada Buddhism. The goal is to understand and reach the truth. Correctness and goodness 3) Buddhism will be a source of knowledge and a center of mind that connects relationships with people at all levels in society. Especially in Thailand 4) Applying art to solve life problems with good results Using knowledge and understanding of the ethics that appear in Buddhist art.3) Analysis of the ethical values appearing in Buddhist art found that Buddhism is a symbol in terms of symbols. It is a form of "Chakra" which can also mean the same thing. The power of goodness and auspiciousness can be found in the appearance of a "blooming lotus". In addition, the application of Dhamma principles Application is the use of only part of something, not the whole thing. But it is about applying Dhamma principles. Application is the taking of a thing or an idea and adapting it to serve a purpose.

Keywords: Values; Ethics; Buddhist Arts

Introduction

The study of ethical values inherent in Buddhist art is considered a crucial mission for researchers, who undertake the role of ambassadors in disseminating Buddhism. Buddhist art, originating from India-Nepal, serves as a cultural and artistic expression that traces its roots to the birthplace of Buddhism. The sacred relics from the four pilgrimage sites in India are brought to Thailand's Suvarnabhumi, curated by the Sangha members of Indian-Nepalese descent who perform religious duties to preserve Buddhism in their homeland. These artifacts are intended for Thai Buddhists to venerate, embodying intellectual heritage and spiritual discipline. The study and transmission of Buddhist ethical discipline derive from historical Buddhist art, interpreting the philosophies and beliefs embedded within. For instance, the creation of Buddha statues symbolizes Lord Buddha's presence, embodying principles articulated by Phra Dhammabodhiwong, who emphasized the importance of nurturing and





maintaining the roots of Buddhism. Failure to care for this root may lead to its withering and eventual disappearance. Thus, planting these roots in Thailand and various other regions ensures the longevity and vitality of Buddhism for future generations (Lam Jansiphalo, 2004).

In the context of using Buddhist art as representations and symbols of Buddhist spirituality, it is essential to study, analyze, and interpret them according to Buddhist principles. This is a significant responsibility for the Sangha or the Buddhist clergy, a "Dhamma envoy" as someone who spreads teachings akin to diplomats or ambassadors serving their nation's interests. Just as diplomats and state representatives safeguard their nation's interests, Dhamma envoys disseminate Buddhist teachings for the welfare of society.

Today, Dhamma envoys are not solely monks; they include diplomats, social workers, lawyers, activists, administrators, scholars, writers, speakers, and observers. The essential quality they must possess is a commitment to Buddhist discipline. Temples, typically comprising chapels, viharas, and residences for monks, serve as the birthplace of Buddhist art known as "Buddhist art" (Royal Institute Dictionary, BE 2556, 2554). Phra Ratchaworamuni (Prayut Payutto) describes Buddhist art as pagodas or sites worthy of respect, including four categories: 1. Reliquary pagodas containing the Buddha's relics, 2. Consumable items used by the Buddha, 3. Dhamma pagodas containing Buddhist scriptures, and 4. Iconic pagodas containing Buddha statues. In Thai art, it refers to sharp-edged objects containing revered objects such as relics and venerable statues

In Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist art presents narratives derived from the teachings of Buddhism, offered as homage by Buddhist followers. Originating from profound faith and venerable values, especially ethical values conducive to virtuous conduct in accordance with the Buddhist path, Dhamma path, and Sangha path, they coexist harmoniously to promote peace and happiness. This aligns with Buddhist ideals, meaning appropriate behavior or behavior not lacking in righteousness, called "dhammajariya" (Phra Sirimangalajariya, Mangkhalatthāṭṭhāṇī, 1993).





Speaking from a Buddhist perspective, it's termed "Buddhist ethics," based on Buddhist doctrine. Besides being a guiding principle for life, Buddhist ethics also promote virtues and enhance moral values. Starting from an individual's profound faith and reverence for the Buddha, their desire to follow his teachings leads to the development of Buddhist ethics. This manifests in rituals, displayed in the form of physical objects such as buildings, places, statues, and pagodas. These are the origins of precious Buddhist artifacts embedded with moral principles or Buddhist philosophy, embodied in the form of sacred objects.

In any case, it can be observed that temples serve as the spiritual center for Buddhists, while monks act as representatives of the temple, demonstrating various roles as spiritual leaders of the community. They serve as focal points of respect, trust, and cooperation, fostering unity and orderliness in terms of morality (virtue), sacrifice for the benefit of others (meditation), and leadership in wisdom. Buddhist art is thus an integral part of intellectual culture, a vital foundation of Thai ways of life rooted deeply in Buddhism. This foundation encompasses not only cultural traditions, customs, beliefs, and even behavioral traits but also ethical principles and teachings of Buddhism. These have continuously influenced and blended with other cultural streams such as Indian and Western cultures. Thai culture has been significantly shaped by Theravada Buddhism, which includes the influence of Hindu-Brahmanism, deeply respected since the Sukhothai period. Thai culture has been continuously influenced and has adhered to the principles of Theravada Buddhism, for example, Buddhist art and art.

Research Objectives

1. To study Buddhist art appearing in the Pali Buddhist scriptures.
2. To analyze the ethical values manifested in Buddhist art within the Pali Buddhist scriptures.





Research Methodology

This research employs qualitative and analytical methods, utilizing documentary investigation. The procedure includes: 1. Studying documentary information, history, origins, philosophies, and related concepts of Buddhist art in India, focusing on significant Buddhist monuments and archaeological sites. This involves observation, analysis, synthesis, and documentation of data and visuals. 2. Gathering information from textbooks, documents, books, media, and relevant research works in both Thai and foreign languages. 3. Analyzing data to interpret Buddhist art. 4. Summarizing the research findings, including recommendations and highlighting useful insights and issues for further study.

Results

Regarding the origins of Buddhist art in the Pali Buddhist scriptures, it was found that the Buddha's lifelike presence remains. However, clear evidence of art creation is lacking. Buddhist art that emerges from the influence of the Buddha's teachings primarily serves as architecture. Buddhist art is about beauty that captivates the heart, enabling access to goodness and truth. It inspires faith in the beautiful, fostering inner peace and mental stability. This includes the creation of Buddha statues, stupas, and pagodas.

Regarding the origins of Buddhist art in the dissemination of Buddhism in Thailand, it was found that necessary social environments include art lovers and artists. When art is essential in human life, it connects with Buddhist teachings. Beginning with Indian Buddhist art (period 1), it is considered the starting point of Buddhist art. Especially in the Asian region (period 2), Buddhist art originates from Indian Buddhist art. Thai Buddhist art (period 3) began in the Thai Empire's trade relations, Buddhist dissemination, and development of various Buddhist artifacts such as Buddha images, pagodas, and pagodas in Thailand, both past and present. Buddhist art in Buddhism is not emphasized.





Analysis of Ethical Values in Symbolic Buddhist Art:

The analysis of ethical values presented in symbolic Buddhist art reveals that Buddhism itself is a symbol. Among these symbols, the "wheel" can convey similar meanings, such as the power of virtue and auspiciousness. This can be seen in the representation of the "blooming lotus," which signifies enlightenment.

It represents a symbol created to enshrine the relics of a righteous monarch and to firmly establish Nirvana and Dhamma in that city. The pinnacle of the sacred relics is enshrined on a lotus pedestal, symbolizing Nibbana as the highest Dhamma. The sacred relics, with their four peaks, represent the Four Noble Truths.

Analysis of Ethical Values in Buddhist Art through Artistic and Cultural Perspectives:

The study of artistic and cultural values begins with the coexistence in society, which involves various forms of relationships such as profession, age, gender, religion, and social status.

Artistic and cultural aspects reflect ancient sites and religious artifacts. The presence of numerous such artifacts indicates the development of cities with economic and cultural exchanges.

The resources and labor required for creating ancient sites and artifacts, combined with the role of port cities engaging in trade both locally and with distant communities, have created a network of relationships between communities.

The way of life in these societies is reflected in three dimensions: the relationship between people and the natural environment, manifested through wisdom in basic living practices related to the four necessities, which include food, clothing, shelter, and medicine.



Analysis of Ethical Values in Buddhist Art According to Buddhist Principles:

The application of Dhamma principles involves translating "theoretical knowledge" into "practical application." Applying these principles means integrating theories, principles, rules, and concepts into practice.

Applying Dhamma principles involves taking "knowledge from one field" and adapting it to "another field." This application entails using knowledge from one domain to address issues in another domain.

Discussions

The analysis of Buddhist art within Theravada Buddhism reveals that during the Buddha's lifetime, there is no clear evidence of the creation of Buddhist art. Instead, what is observed is Buddhist art influenced by the teachings of Buddhism, expressed through architecture. Buddhist art is fundamentally about beauty, captivating the mind to inspire devotion and access to goodness and truth. It serves as a source of inspiration for faith in virtuous things, fostering inner peace and mental stability.

This observation aligns with the research of Phra Montree Suputtiko (Buddhi), who conducted a comparative study of Aristotle's ethics with Buddhist ethics. The findings indicate that Aristotle's virtues include intellectual virtues, characterized by theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom. Correct actions arise from this, potentially leading to the discovery of the ultimate purpose of all endeavors through the use of reason.

In contrast, Buddhist teachings emphasize that human life is filled with suffering, with desire (tanha) being the root cause of this suffering. Liberation from suffering is achievable by following the Noble Eightfold Path, which is a practical application of the Dhamma.



This comparison underscores that while Aristotle's ethics focus on the development of virtues through reason and practice, Buddhist ethics address the alleviation of suffering through a structured path of moral and mental development. Analysis of Ethical Values in Buddhist Art, the analysis of ethics depicted in Buddhist art reveals the following insights:

Integration into Culture: Buddhist art has become an integral part of the culture, transitioning from Buddhist practices to the Buddhist way of life, which forms a fundamental basis of Thai society. This influence extends to traditions, beliefs, and even the personality traits of Thai people, all of which are rooted in ethical principles.

Purpose of Buddhist Art in Temples: In temples such as Wat Suwannaphum Phutthachayanthi, the interpretation of Theravada Buddhism aims to understand and attain truth, correctness, and goodness. Buddhist art within these temples serves as a medium to achieve these goals.

Source of Knowledge and Unity: Buddhism serves as a source of knowledge and a center for spiritual unity, linking various levels of society, particularly in Thailand. It connects individuals across different social strata.

Application of Art in Solving Life's Problems: The adaptation of art to address life's challenges has proven effective. By applying the understanding of ethics as depicted in Buddhist art, individuals can find solutions to personal issues. This is consistent with the research conducted by Srinual Supanusorn, who studied "A Good Life According to Buddhist Ethics." The findings show that a good life in Buddhist ethics is one of chastity, attainable through wisdom and adherence to the principles of the Threefold Training (Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā). This approach allows individuals to live with an awareness of causes and effects, remain unattached, and use these principles as guidance for solving contemporary life problems.



Srinual Supanusorn's research highlights that applying Buddhist ethics can align with modern life, suggesting that if individuals in society study and follow these principles with reason and without attachment, they will be able to reduce problems in their lives. Understanding the transient nature of things helps individuals to live more effectively and with greater ease (Srinual Supanusorn, 2003). Analysis of Ethical Values in Buddhist Art: the analysis of ethical values in Buddhist art reveals the following points:

Symbolism in Buddhism: Buddhism is symbolically significant, particularly in the region of Suvarnabhumi. Beyond traditional mediums such as individuals (which have always been crucial), Buddhist symbols also include the "wheel" which represents the power of virtue and auspiciousness. This is reflected in symbols such as the "blooming lotus," which signifies enlightenment and purity.

Application of Dhamma Principles: Applying Dhamma principles involves using only certain aspects of these teachings rather than applying them in their entirety. It means adapting and utilizing specific ideas or concepts to meet particular objectives. For example, the research by Sanoe Thiantong on "Analyzing Dhamma Principles in Buddhist Art: A Case Study of Phra Kru Upai Pharathon of Wat Phai Rong Wua" highlights that the creation of significant Buddhist art, such as large Buddha statues, is driven by deep faith in Buddhism. This resulted in the establishment of many religious monuments within Wat Phai Rong Wua. The dissemination of Dhamma and the propagation of teachings often involve various methods. While some rely on monks or Dhamma missionaries to spread the teachings, Sanoe Thiantong refers to his own approach as "Buddhism Missionary" where he uses Buddha statues to proclaim Buddhist teachings. He applied the three core principles of Buddhist teachings: 1) Doing good thoroughly, 2) Abstaining from all evil, and 3) Purifying the mind. These principles are adapted and embodied in Buddhist art and artifacts, which include religious symbols and proverbs (Sanoe Thiantong, 2006).



New Knowledges

This research is a study on "Analyzing the Ethical Values Reflected in the Buddhist Art of Wat Suvarnabhumi Buddhachayanti, Bang Sao Thong District, Samut Prakan Province." The researcher presents the following knowledge derived from the study:

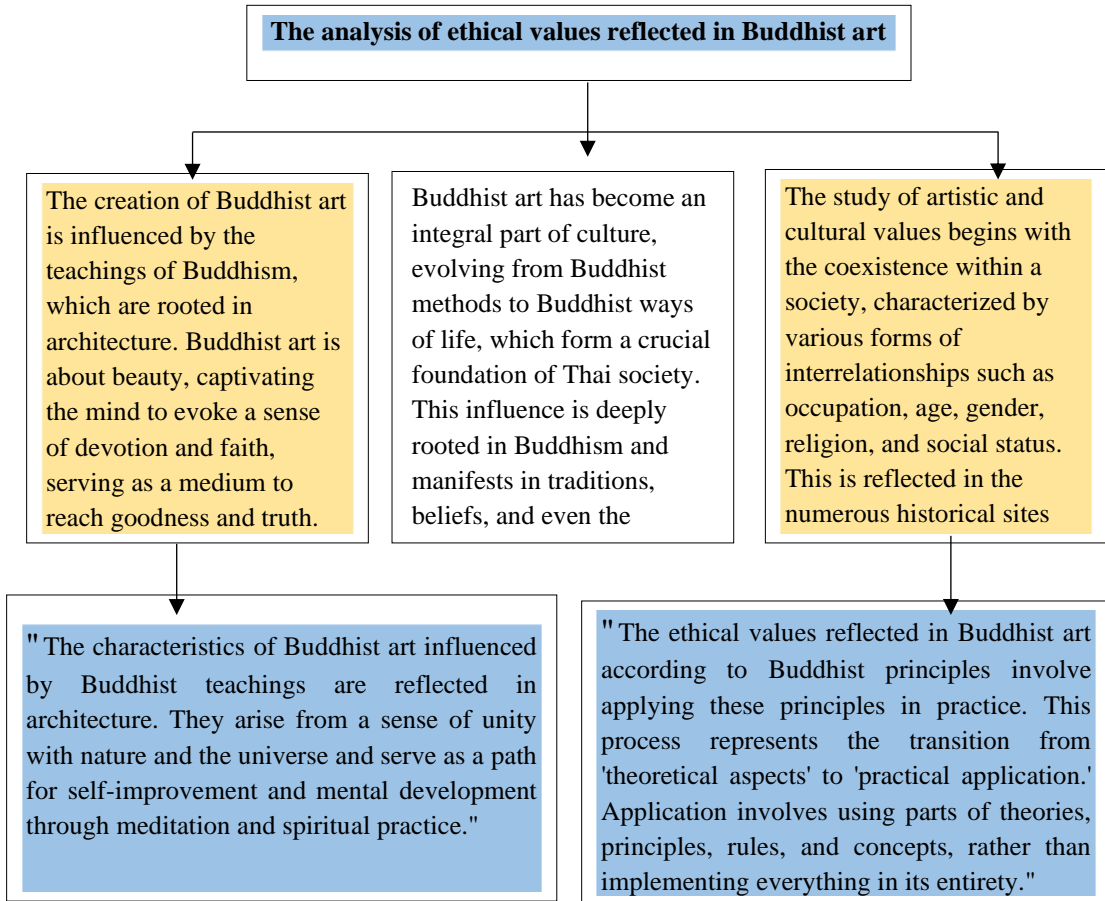


Figure 1: Diagram of new knowledges of Analyzing the Ethical Values Reflected in the Buddhist Art



Conclusions

The analysis of the ethical values reflected in the Buddhist art of Wat Suvarnabhumi Buddhachayanti according to Buddhist principles reveals several key aspects. These include:

Application of Dhamma Principles: Translating theory into practice involves applying theories, principles, rules, and concepts.

Cross-disciplinary Application: Adapting knowledge from one field to solve problems in another.

Utilization of Dhamma: Applying concepts or ideas to achieve specific objectives or goals, distinct from mere imitation.

Selective Application: Using parts of something for benefit rather than the whole.

Adaptation for New Roles and Goals: Repurposing something for a new function to achieve new objectives.





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