

Thai Buddhism and the Dimension of Sensuality in the Context of Ascetics and Laity in Thailand

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Abstract

During the past year, several scandals occurred within Thailand's monastic community. For example, there have been cases of abbots embezzling temple donation funds or engaging in romantic relationships with laypeople while using their ascetic status for personal gain. This issue is not new; similar circumstances have recurred repeatedly. Although the Thai monastic community has tried to manage and resolve these circumstances, the problem remains unsolved. This issue is a major challenge that significantly tests the Thai monastic community. Buddhism is perceived as the national religion, and the majority of the Thai population holds it in high regard.

Moreover, although Thailand is regarded as a land of Buddhism, some foreigners also perceive it as a land of sensuality. That is to say, it cannot be denied that Thailand is famous for prostitution, even though it is illegal. However, according to Buddhist beliefs, prostitution is considered an unwholesome profession. On the other hand, those who work as prostitutes in Thailand and belong to Buddhism do not abandon their religion. Indeed, some of them have strong faith in Buddhism and remain connected to their religion through merit-making. They hope that the merit will lead them to a better life. This aspect forms part of the article's effort to help readers understand sensuality in the context of religion and society in Thailand.

Keywords: Thai Buddhism, Sensuality, Thai Ascetics, Thai laity

Introduction

There is much debate about when Buddhism first arrived in Thailand. Some scholars assert that missionaries brought Buddhism to Thailand during the Asoka period. In contrast, some scholars say that Buddhism first arrived in Thailand after the Asoka period based on archaeological evidence associated with Mon-Khmer settlements. At that time, their capital was *Dvārāvati*, which is now

known as Nakhon Pathom. However, Buddhism arrived in Thailand in different periods and continued to develop over time. As a result, Buddhism plays an important role in shaping social norms in Thailand. Many characteristics of Thai people—their lifestyles, identity, humility, smiles, and kindness—are influenced by religion. However, the influence of Buddhism is evident in several dimensions of Thai society. These dimensions include art, architecture, and literature, all of which reflect Buddhist themes and values. Moreover, the teachings of Buddhism have promoted a sense of civic and social responsibility, guiding individuals in their daily lives and interactions with others.

Therefore, culture and tradition in Thailand often reflect the connection between traditional existence and religion. Meanwhile, Thai society is influenced by religion, which establishes a framework where doing good leads to heaven and doing bad leads to hell. Although not all Thai people identify as Buddhist, almost all do. Not surprisingly, Thailand bases its public holidays on Buddhist religious celebrations. Therefore, Buddhism remains relevant to Thai people in several dimensions. Thai Buddhism also resonates with the dimension of sensuality, a connection that spans from its inception to the present day. How are the two related? We will discuss and examine this point next.

The Connection Between Sensuality And Buddhism In Thailand

The Thai people have had a long-standing relationship with Buddhism. Therefore, every aspect of Thai culture is rooted in Buddhism. In ancient times in Thailand, the Thai people were taught about sin and merit; those who committed wicked deeds would go to hell and be punished after death. In contrast, those who perform beneficial deeds receive merit and go to heaven after death. Therefore, Thai Buddhists are often fearful of unwholesome actions. Meanwhile, Thai people seek to gain merit to offset unwholesome deeds committed intentionally or unintentionally and to secure a better future life. Meanwhile, sexuality is considered taboo and is not discussed openly in public spaces. Historically, Thai people were taught by their ancestors that sexual topics should not be talked about or opinions expressed openly because it is impolite and inappropriate to talk about or express opinions in public. Moreover, sexuality is considered dirty and impure for those who have a culture and tradition that is based on religion. Meanwhile, attitudes towards sexuality in Thailand is suppressed by culture and tradition, which has its roots in Buddhist teachings. Therefore, any sexual conduct that suggests inappropriate behaviour is considered sinful. Specifically, in the case of being unfaithful to one's partner or having a sexual relationship with someone other than one's partner, it also includes seduction and rape or other acts without consent. Such conduct is mentioned in the common precepts for lay followers and also in the higher precept for ascetics.

A foreigner's overall perspective on Thailand includes both positive and negative aspects. From a positive perspective, Thailand is a land of smiles, kind people, generosity, beautiful beaches, etc. From a negative perspective, Thailand is a haven for men seeking sensual pleasure. This makes Thailand famous and notorious for prostitution and for sex workers known internationally. Although Thailand is

a land of Buddhists, it doesn't mean that those who belong to Buddhism should engage in dishonest work, which violates the precept. Rather, everyone has different constraints when pursuing a livelihood. Therefore, sometimes some of the Buddhists need to fail to observe Buddhist precepts.

Prostitution in Early Thailand

According to Boonchalaksi and Guest (1998), who have written about prostitution in Thailand, there is no clear evidence to indicate when it first appeared. However, traces or evidence of prostitution in Thailand can be found in the travel records made by foreigners who visited Thailand around the early 14th century AD, during the period between the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya eras (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1998). The Ayutthaya era (1350-1767) marked the beginning of trade and connections with foreign nations in Thailand (Fine Arts Department of Thailand, n.d.). Consequently, foreign travel accounts from that period recorded prostitution in Thailand. For instance, Simon de La Loubère's record of his journey as the ambassador from France (1642-1729) includes a mysterious story about prostitutes in Ayutthaya, detailing aspects such as the number of prostitutes in a brothel and the nature of prostitution during that time (SILPA-MAG, 2023). In addition, Chinese immigrants also had an important role in building the history of prostitution in the Ayutthaya era, which was prosperous and extended in Chinese communities established in Thailand at that time. Moreover, at that time, most of the workers who migrated from China to Thailand were male (Boonchalaksi & Guest, 1998).

Moreover, prostitution in Thailand was legal for a period but was later prohibited and remains illegal. Why did prostitution in Thailand change from legal to illegal? Human rights concerns could be the driving force behind this change. Prostitution could be connected to several problems, such as crime, human trafficking, drugs, and other illegal activities. Meanwhile, from the perspective of religious ethics, prostitution is immoral in both theory and practice. Engaging in inappropriate sexual conduct is often considered an immoral act, especially for Buddhists, as noted above regarding their views on sexual activities. As we know, Thailand is predominantly a Buddhist country. Therefore, the government of Thailand may consider prostitution inappropriate in a country predominantly practicing Buddhism. However, during the early period, prostitution occurred in Thailand around the same time that the final form of Buddhism was introduced. This point is noteworthy: in the same period, the final forms of Buddhism arrived in Thailand, and prostitution happened early. When the final form of Buddhism arrived in Thailand, it was prosperous and widespread all around the country. It seems that Thai people at that time were very faithful to Buddhism, which made it difficult to act in detrimental ways that were contrary to religious principles. Conversely, prostitution in Thailand emerged simultaneously as a result of international trade.

In early Thailand, prostitution played a significant role in driving the economy, which relied on trade with other countries. We cannot deny that the economy in Thailand plays an important role, as religion does. However, the Thai government tried to manage prostitution in Thailand by controlling it under

the law. At this point, it appears that religion plays a significant role in influencing the direction of prostitution in Thailand. However, we can't deny that the influence of Buddhism extends even to grey-market businesses, even though that business may contribute to national economic growth. This delicate relationship between religion and commerce creates a unique societal dynamic, where moral considerations often clash with economic imperatives. As a result, the ongoing dialogue surrounding these issues continues to shape public policy and social attitudes in Thailand.

The Duties Of Thai Buddhist And Making Merit

Generally, the duty of a Thai Buddhist is not much different from that of Buddhists all around the world. Each Buddhist country may have specific duties that differ depending on the tradition, culture, and context of its society. According to Canon, the duties of Buddhists are not explicitly mentioned in Buddhist texts. Instead, the precept serves as a framework for the duties that Buddhists are expected to follow and practice. The duties of Thai Buddhists can be classified into several categories. However, to understand the duties of Thai Buddhists, we would classify them into two categories: the duties of Thai Buddhists in the context of the countryside and the city.

The duties of Thai Buddhist in the context of countryside

In the countryside, residents often wake up early in the morning to prepare food for their families and for ascetics participating in the alms round. After the Buddhists have finished offering food for the alms round of ascetics, some members of each family will prepare themselves and go to the village temple to participate in religious ceremonies. After completing religious ceremonies, Buddhists return to work and resume their daily activities. This lifestyle will continue to repeat throughout their lives. On significant religious days, Thai Buddhists prioritise their activities. For example, on Magha Puja Day, Thai Buddhists in the village often carry nutritious food, beneficial products, and charitable donations to offer to the ascetic in the village temple. Meanwhile, the ascetics also have the duty of preaching the Dharma to Buddhist beings in precept. Generally, ascetics go for alms rounds only on regular days; they do not go on Buddhist Holy Days and religious holidays. This practice varies based on the culture of the ascetics in different locations, each having its own style of alms rounds.

The duties of Thai Buddhist in the context of city

The lifestyle of Thai Buddhists in the context of the city is often fast-forward, not the slow life of Thai Buddhists in the countryside. They don't have enough time to prepare food for the alms round in the early morning. Therefore, Thai Buddhists in the city often purchase pre-prepared food for alms rounds to offer to ascetics. Meanwhile, ascetics living in the city also adapt to the urban lifestyle. Some ascetics can go for an alms round in each village in the small community. Conversely, some ascetics must remain in one location for alms rounds instead of moving around the area, such as to the fresh market. Thai Buddhists in the city often have less time to offer food for alms rounds, including

participating in Buddhist ceremonies. However, Thai Buddhists in the city perform their Buddhist duties based on individual convenience. Thai Buddhists in the city often prioritise and perform Buddhist rituals on important religious days and on their own significant days, such as birthdays.

Overall, the duties of Thai Buddhists depend on the context of society. If Thai Buddhists live in the countryside or a village, they often pay more attention to and engage with their Buddhist duties than those who reside in the city, where the lifestyle is faster-paced. Therefore, the duties of Thai Buddhists differed depending on context. Making merit in the form of Thai Buddhism also has several formats, but mainly, it's giving alms. According to the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* (AN 8.36), the text discusses the basis of making merit. There are three bases of making merit in Buddhism as follows: giving, exemplary conduct, and meditation (Bodhi, 2012). Moreover, the sutta also discusses the result of making merit. For instance, when someone does a little of the merit of giving and good conduct but doesn't meditate, they will be reborn among underprivileged individuals after death (Bodhi, 2012). In contrast, if a person engages more in making merit, their next rebirth will likely be in a favourable place and condition, such as being reborn in heaven. For this reason, the Thai Buddhist belief in making merit would lead to a beneficial realm.

Prostitute And Connection With Buddhism In Thailand

Since the Buddha's era, there was a connection between prostitutes and religion through making merit, including changing the mind to become ascetic and renounce worldly life. For instance, the story of Ambapālī, who lived during the Buddha's era, illustrates this connection. Ambapālī was a famous courtesan, beautiful and rich in Vesālī at that time. She was the one who donated a mango grove for the Sangha to stay during the rainy season due to her soul being faithful to Buddhism. Afterward, she renounced worldly life and became a Bhikkhuni (Walters, n.d.). This is one of the examples that makes us see the width of the connection between prostitution and Buddhism clearly. We can't deny that the prostitute is symbolic of sexuality, which is deemed an obstacle for ascetics to avoid. Therefore, prostitutes at that time often faced discrimination from society or even from ascetics.

Despite society's view of prostitution as an outcast career, they are often overlooked. From the perspective of Buddhism, it doesn't look like prostitution is a sinful profession at all. According to the precepts of *kāma*, the prohibition of sexual misconduct in Buddhism defines a prostitute as someone engaged in a business. For instance, when men, whether married or unmarried, pay prostitutes for temporary sexual encounters, the act is not considered sexual misconduct for the prostitutes because they are operating a business; thus, their profession is not deemed immoral (Pandita, 2019). However, when we examine the details of the third precept's description in Buddhist texts, we will find many aspects that require thorough understanding and must be distinguished in context each time, as they cannot be combined or adjusted for the current context. We should always use our critical thinking skills when reading Buddhist texts.

Let's return to the topic of prostitutes and their connection to Buddhism in Thailand. In that context of ancient times, wealthy prostitutes were often very supportive of monastic life. The belief in doing good deeds influenced Buddhist prostitutes in Thailand. They believe that the merit they accumulate will lead to their rebirth in a better realm, preventing them from returning to this profession. Additionally, they believe that the merit they accumulate may help them achieve prosperity in their profession. Anywise, the choice depends on personal belief. As they are Buddhists, they know that prostitution is not a very honest profession from the Buddhist perspective. Even though Buddhist texts didn't say much about the prostitute profession, the canon usually warned monks or ascetics to be aware of prostitutes, such as that they may deceive ascetics into falling into lust. However, in the present day, ascetics in monasteries can't identify or recognise who is a prostitute; whenever someone enters a monastery, the ascetics usually treat every Buddhist equally. Because ascetics couldn't be asked about the profession of Buddhists before entering the monasteries, it is not the way to practice. Monasteries seem like public places that welcome all castes, regardless of what profession you work in. Therefore, monasteries are deemed a source of spiritual comfort for those who are in the prostitution profession in Thailand.

Nevertheless, on the other side, due to what we mentioned above, this perspective is seen as monastics overlooking behind the scenes of prostitutes and what they have done to make merit through charitable donations to monasteries. According to Avila (2008), she raised her perspective on the connection between prostitution and Buddhism in Thailand, stating that it seems Buddhism in Thailand ignores and does not dare to directly criticize prostitution in Thailand, even though it is illegal. Moreover, she elaborated on the concept of making merit, suggesting that it creates a vulnerability for monasteries to overlook donations from prostitutes. It seems like Thai Buddhism supports and promotes prostitution indirectly, and there is not much attention paid to solving the problem of the illegal prostitution profession; in contrast, it seems to lead to prostitution prospering in the trade. As a result, she gives two reasons for the problem: first, religious inequality in Thailand, which is not the same as in the West, so it's difficult to solve the problem of human rights in Thailand. Secondly, because Buddhism had privilege in Thailand, privileges blur religious and social boundaries, affecting merit attainment in Buddhism and affecting societal issues like prostitution (Avila, 2008). Buddhism fails to adequately address the issue, resulting in insufficient efforts to resolve it.

Nevertheless, Avila (2008) mentioned it as an example in her thesis to support her perspective that Thai Buddhism indirectly supports prostitution. Mattani Rutnin, who created a documentary film about child prostitution in Northern Thailand, stated in part of a monk's interview that contributions derived from prostitution funded the monastery's seven-story edifice. Moreover, Avila (2008) argues

that the monastics accept money donations from Buddhists without conducting any investigations into their sources. Where does the money for the donations made by Buddhists come from? Even though monastics would know where the money donated by Buddhists came from, it is clear that Thai Buddhism indirectly supports the prostitute profession. It may be sensitive to mention, but Thai Buddhism indirectly supports prostitution. Nevertheless, Avila (2008) expressed how she could claim that Thai Buddhism helps to support prostitution indirectly according to Buddhist texts regarding the third precept, which describes ten kinds of wives the man should not commit adultery with, except the last two on the list, because the women had already promised a man; it would mean them having a husband. From this perspective, Avila (2008) argues that the Thai Buddhist view of prostitutes, based on Buddhist teachings, is not negative because it focuses on their karmic impurity instead of their sexual impurity.

Moreover, Avila (2008) also expressed another perspective regarding Thai Buddhism, helping to support prostitution indirectly from the viewpoint of the loving kindness concept. Buddhism is an open religion and usually extends loving kindness to all sentient beings. That is to say, Buddhism always supports forgiveness and provides an opportunity for those who want to repent from sin and do good instead. After individuals repent from sin and strive to become good people, the Buddha typically teaches them about the Noble Eightfold Path to help cultivate and correct their mindset on the right path. Moreover, it also emphasizes the basics of the five precepts that guide the everyday lives of Buddhists (Avila, 2008). However, this is merely one perspective reflected in the connection between prostitutes and Thai Buddhism. In addition, other scholars have presented a different perspective that relies on personal experience, critical analysis, and interpretation.

Overall, we will neither support nor blame Thai Buddhism or the main Buddhist texts that indirectly contribute to the acceptance of prostitution. In contrast, we see that Buddhism is a religion that is logical and reasonable, and fair for every profession, not only for prostitutes, but also for all professions, both honest and dishonest. Buddhism not only supports people who perform charitable deeds but also embraces those who have committed unlawful deeds and wish to repent for their sins by cultivating a new mindset that encourages them to change their ways and pursue honest professions. In addition, why do prostitutes like to make charitable donations to monasteries? This is because it serves as a means for them to accumulate merit for their next life or rebirth, as well as to support the growth of their businesses. Moreover, the reason to accumulate the merit of a prostitute is so that they know that the prostitute is not an honest profession according to Buddhist belief. Prostitution, as a profession related to sexuality, is viewed in Buddhist teachings as a source of suffering due to attachment, which can be difficult to overcome without proper practices. Therefore, those Buddhists who are doing the prostitute profession know well this teaching. For this reason, it leads them to feel guilty about a profession they are in. To reduce the feeling of guilt, they donated

some of the money they earned from prostitution to monastics. It seems as atonement through making merit. Also, it's a Buddhist's duty to help, so prostitutes donate to monasteries.

Sensuality In The Context Of Ascetics In Thailand

In 2025, there was a major news story (in July) in Thailand involving the Buddhist clergy regarding sexuality. There were approximately 13 ascetics who had engaged with a laywoman. Some ascetics are suspended from Bhikkhu. Among 13 ascetics, they're the provincial chief abbot in Thailand, which is a fairly high position for a Bhikkhu (Thai PBS World, 2025). This is not the first instance of ascetics in Thai Buddhism being associated with laywomen and their sensuality. Upon reviewing historical records, we found many cases of this kind. Even during Buddha's era, many ascetics engaged in sexual activities, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Vinaya for Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis to regulate their behaviour. Why do they keep falling into the trap of sensuality again and again? Next, we would determine the answer by examination.

The power of money and politic

Money is a famous thing and is simple to donate to monasteries. Thai Buddhists generally prefer making charitable donations over purchasing physical items. Perhaps they thought that it was difficult to decide what things to buy and benefit monasteries; it was easy to donate money to them. Thereafter, ascetics can manipulate the charitable donation to decide what should be bought and paid for to benefit monasteries. Moreover, according to the Buddhist belief in giving alms, the more we give alms, the more merit we receive. Although merit is considered an abstraction, Thai Buddhists are encouraged to engage in merit-making practices based on their beliefs. As a result, many monasteries in Thailand receive many charitable donations, especially big and famous monasteries. This situation creates challenges for ascetics. Monasteries in Thailand have a privilege for a tax-free zone, and the government has no right to monitor the flow of money within the monasteries. Because monasteries are places of religion, faith, and spirituality, charitable donations from laypeople are not considered income; instead, they are classified as alms. However, if a monastery's earnings from being invited to perform religious ceremonies exceed 10 million baht per year, it must pay tax only on the amount that exceeds 10 million baht (The Revenue Department, n.d.).

Additionally, making merit may contribute to the decline of the clergy's power due to the influence of money. Before the practice of making merit began, the faith of Buddhists, which is tied to religion, was also closely connected to making merit. Whenever a Buddhist has greater faith, they also desire to make more merit. As we described before, making merit by giving has changed in each era according to the Buddhists' convenience. For Thai Buddhists, making merit through charitable donations is convenient; they can easily do this from anywhere in the world by simply scanning a QR code or transferring money online, as long as they have internet access. Money from donations poses a

significant risk for ascetics in Thai Buddhism who may misuse it for unethical actions. Because donation money is given freely to ascetics, it creates opportunities for misuse. Therefore, ascetics can use the donated money as they wish. If there is no one to investigate, it becomes easier for ascetics to commit more illicit deeds. This kind of case often happened among abbots of monasteries, who have full authority to control everything in monasteries. Moreover, an abbot may invite a lay follower to join him in concealing bad deeds.

Can you imagine in a year how much Thai monasteries earn from charitable donations? Whenever people have more faith in monasteries and ascetics, they will donate more money as well. Charitable donations can create vulnerability for ascetics who are greedy. Many times, the power of money has led ascetics to become greedy and engage in sexual relationships. For instance, a news report from the Bangkok Post (a Thai newspaper) on August 14, 2025, stated that the former abbot of Nakhorn Swan province and his wife conspired to embezzle temple funds for a year. Moreover, the former abbot is also involved with two other women in romantic relationships (Ngamkham, 2025). This means that when an ascetic lacks mental training, they may not recognise their own greed, which can lead to careless mistakes and overlooking problems that arise because of their actions. In addition, the abbot of Thai Buddhism wields political power and has the authority to manage all affairs within their monasteries. Therefore, whenever politics and money combine, it can easily lead individuals who lack mindfulness to fall into the trap of greed. This might be the main reason why the abbot dares to do wrong and isn't concerned about the issue and would follow up after they make a mistake.

Moreover, this kind of situation is not unique to Buddhism; other religions, such as Christianity, also have cases where priests have been involved in corruption. For instant, according to the website Investopedia reported that in 2019, Pope Francis tasked Cardinal Reinhard Marx with overseeing an audit of the Vatican Bank. Since its establishment in 1984, the bank had faced continuous deficits for decades, amounting to over \$18.4 million. This occurred despite the Vatican receiving massive income from various sources, including museum entrance fees, donations from Catholics and dioceses worldwide, and investment in various funds and businesses both within Italy and abroad. While, the investigation results, published in 2020, indicated that several high-ranking executives of the Vatican Bank were involved in corruption and embezzlement (Parker, 2025). Nevertheless, the issue that escalated into an international legal case involves the Peruvian charitable organization Sodalitium Christainae Vitae (SCV). Managed by church clergy, the organization was accused of exploiting tax exemption privileges granted to Roman Catholic Church entities under the Lateran Treaty. This agreement, in effect since 1929, recognizes the independence and sovereignty of Vatican City. Clergy and executives of the SCV were accused of using improper methods, including pressure and intimidation, to force Peruvian farmers to sell their land. The Church then allocated this land for the development of over 30 cemeteries. Simultaneously, the price margins from these land transactions were allegedly diverted into nominee companies in the United States (Allen, 2025).

However, this type of problem is not new; it has existed since the Buddha's era and continues to persist today. Although there are many case studies, the lessons they learnt from the incidents that occurred seem useless for contemporary ascetics due to their laxity and negligence regarding Vinaya. As the world develops rapidly, provocations also increase and can disrupt the stable lives of ascetics who adhere to the vinaya. Meanwhile, ascetics adhere to strict precepts and strive to control their worldly desires, but since they are not yet free from *saṃsāra*, addressing the issue of sexual misconduct among them remains challenging. In the current era, numerous stimuli can lead ascetics to violate the vinaya at any moment, which is why they must exercise caution in the world. Whenever people possess both political power and money, it can lead to disaster for ascetics who lack mental control and mindfulness awareness. These ascetics must cultivate elasticity and a profound understanding of their spiritual path to navigate the complexities of modern life. By patronizing community support and engaging in continuous self-reflection, they may identify ways to uphold their principles amidst the distractions that abound.

The laxity in monastic discipline

Ascetics holding the precepts total 227 rules according to monastic discipline (Brahmali, 2021). However, ascetics cannot follow all the rules and precepts they are expected to uphold. Meanwhile, lay followers who adhere to only five precepts still struggle to fully follow them, indicating a lack of adherence among these followers. Ascetics couldn't hold all 227 precepts, which isn't surprising, as they are ordinary people, just like the general public; they merely try to control and avoid worldly life to achieve enlightenment and be free from *saṃsāra*. How did we know the majority of ascetics couldn't hold all the precepts (227 rules)? Observations indicate that the general ascetic lifestyle differs from that of the Buddha's era. For instance, Thai ascetics are often found in cities or well-known monasteries, which leads to a luxurious lifestyle that includes using high-end smartphones and frequenting upscale coffee cafés. However, there are still some ascetics who can hold all 227 precepts, but it is a very rare case; some ascetics break precepts due to some situation that compels them to do that, such as an abbot who lives alone in a temple, so he may have to handle charity donations, and another thing may cause him to break the precepts unintentionally.

Nevertheless, in Thailand, every Buddhist holy day (Wan Pra in the Thai language), bhikkhus have to perform the Uposatha ceremony or Uposatha observance. It is the recitation of the Bhikkhus' pātimokkha every half a month, or 15 days, to maintain precepts and review the 227 rules of monastery law (Access to Insight, 2013). This is an important performance and necessary for ascetics to follow. Moreover, Uposatha observance is a way to warn the minds of Bhikkhus to be aware of their behavior— both mistakes already made and actions that might happen in the future. It seems Uposatha observance is the ceremony of Bhikkhus' redemption for both intentional and unintentional precept actions. Therefore, when Bhikkhus do not participate in Uposatha observance, they typically

lack awareness of precepts and are more susceptible to engaging in misconduct. Perhaps some bhikkhus who attend the Uposatha observance usually feel no remorse for misconduct, so they closely resemble prisoners who repeatedly commit the same fault and return to jail, never feeling remorse for their mistakes.

Conclusion

Buddhism has been grounded in Thailand since early times, shaping its customs, traditions, and way of life. Consequently, Buddhism is regarded as a high and holy religion by the majority of the Thai population. Furthermore, the Thai government grants specific privileges to Buddhism as the nation's primary religion. However, Thai Buddhism, the dimension of sensuality is typically examined through both the direct and indirect contexts of the laity and the ascetic. Within the laity, sex workers who maintain a strong faith in Buddhism represent an indirect connection to the dimension of sexuality. Because sex work involves the commercial exchange of sexual services, it often occupies an ambiguous position regarding the precept of sexual misconduct. These individuals maintain their connection to the monastic community primarily through merit-making, such as providing charitable donations to monasteries. Meanwhile, within certain segments of the monastic community, challenges arise when individuals succumb to lust and greed or lack proper discipline. Such figures often become involved in sexual misconduct, particularly when they are corrupted by the privileges of their position or the influence of financial donations.

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