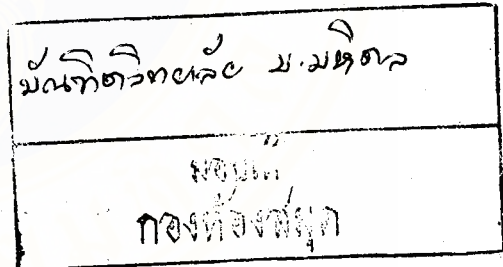


A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE THERAVADA BUDDHIST
AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CONCEPTS OF LOVE:
A CASE STUDY AT BAAN MAI AND THAKHAM SUB-DISTRICTS,
SAMPHRAN DISTRICT, NAKORN PATHOM PROVINCE

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims at presenting a comparative study of the concept of love taught in Theravada Buddhism and Roman Catholic Christianity. The first part of the study covers the analysis of the notion of love from the scriptures of both religions - the Tripitaka and the Holy Bible - as well as commentaries, the explanations of scholars and traditions. A comparative survey of some agreements and disagreements between these two religions in this topic are also taken into consideration.

The documentary study indicates that there seems on the surface to be little difference in the characteristics of love taught by these two traditions. However, there is a difference in the source of this concept of love, since Buddhism teaches the cultivation of the attitude of love through the exercise of the mind in meditation without reference to any supernatural Deity. This is in contrast to

Christianity, which believes that the source of love is God. Love comes from God and has been poured out to man in the Person of Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Christians practise the development of love by following the example of the life of Jesus. This can be summed up in the inseparable commandments concerning love for God and love for neighbour which covers the love for enemies as well. Love in Christianity consists of both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Both religions agree that the expression of love must be seen in actions and duties towards oneself and others.

The latter part of the study aims at the investigation of the influence of religion on the behaviour of the people. Field research was conducted on two sample groups of people: Theravade Buddhists and Roman Catholic Christians. The Buddhist sample population is in village 1 at Wat Tiended, Bean Mai Sub-district, and the Catholic Christian sample group is in village 5 at St. Peter Church, Thakham Sub-district. The research included an interview with the religious leaders of both villages.

From the field study, it was found that even though the behaviour of the people can be interpreted in relation to other than religious factors, there is still some religious influence on the behaviour of the people.

The field study suggests that the behaviour of love towards others is practised more among the Buddhists than among the Christians.