

BHOJANA SAPPĀYA: MINDFULNESS CONSUMPTION PRACTICE OF THERAVĀDA MONKS

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INTRODUCTION

Health problems caused by consuming inappropriate food has been a crucial global issue for over a decade. In Thailand, the government has committed substantial budget and resources on health care to combat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Moreover, statistics show that each year such disease are the cause of more than three hundred thousand deaths, or seventy-three percent of all deaths in Thailand (Thai Health Organization, 2016). The health situation of Thai monks mirrored that of the Thai laities. The record of Priest hospital visits showed that in 2015 the top three diseases were dyslipidemia (high lipid level in blood), diabetes, and hypertension. This can be explained by the fact that Thai monks are passive consumers of lay food. They live on alms, consuming food received from laity, some of which is considered unhealthy - sweetened, oily, and salty foods.

For this reason, my research project aims to study the inter-relationship of three social facts: health, food, and religious practices, and to treat them all as a reflection of broader cultural patterns. All these practices influence ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, both for the individual and society at large. As Durkheim

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(1982, 1984) and Malinowski (1945) noted years ago, culture is a holistic enterprise in which all parts of society or social structures are interrelated as a coherent whole by norms, beliefs, and values.

According to this definition of culture, society evolves just like an organism does. From the primitive to modern era, living patterns have changed from hunting and gathering patterns to agriculture, industry, and investment. This shows societies are emergent entities that grow in complexity over time. In our modern world, evidence can be seen for this in globalization, which is a massive movement of social evolution that makes societies around the world more interconnected and interdependent (Durkheim, 1984; Pals, 2006; Skelton & Allen, 1999). In this manner, there is a connection between social evolution and rational thinking in all aspects of culture.

These observations on culture are important because over the decades our consuming patterns have drastically change consumption patterns in food culture (Skelton & Allen, 1999; Dixon, et al., 2013). Culture consists of patterns of group behavior, and food consumption is obviously an element part of this. Changing consumption patterns therefore requires a broad understanding of how they are related to broader cultural patterns. For this reason, in this study I categorized the dynamic changes on cultural food consumption according to four broad dimensions: (1) food material, which refers to the agricultural, industrial, and other material processes of making foods, as well as the chemical and artificial substances used in their production (Goody, 2013); (2) acquiring mode, which refers to the buying, cooking, and eating patterns of food consumption (Barthes, 2013); (3) patterns of consumption, which refers to how people tend to eat as well as overeat (Mead, 2013); and (4) consumption goals, which refers to the reasons that people consume food, such as for taste, luxury, beauty, or health (Bourdieu, 2013; Chen, 2009; Parasecoli, 2013).

Food consumption patterns in any given culture are important indicator for issues of health and longevity. As Ludwig Feuerbach once wrote, “Man is what he eats” (Cherno, 1963). For this reason, a negative change of cultural food patterns can gradually expose people to inappropriate food consumption that causes health problems. In Thailand, food culture also has a dynamic history and

has changed drastically over the past four decades. The economic growth and poverty reduction over this period has led to overeating and obesity. More consumption of spicy food, fast food, exotic food, industrial food, and processed food has become popular and gradually increased the malnutrition of Thai people. People eat too much sweetened, oily, and salty food (Mead, 2013). As a recent thirty-two years' study recently reported, higher consumption of unhealthy saturated fat increases the risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2016), and this is evident across Thailand. It is therefore hardly surprising that a lot of Thai laity and monks are suffering with health problem caused by consuming inappropriate food without mindfulness.

To solve the problem, modern medicine has offered several means of dealing with this health issue, but none of them have resolved it completely and a perfect solution has yet to be found. In fact, Capra (1983) proposed that the reductionism methodology used by modern medicine provided only an approximate answer to the problem. Modern medicine has offered an empirical path to heal particular illnesses but has not covered overall health. On the other hand, alternative medicine has given a vague means to attain overall good health (Payutto, 2006).

It is for this reason that we must have a broad cultural approach when considering how to change consuming. For instance, a study about determinants of eating behavior in university students found that individual (intrapersonal), social (interpersonal), environmental, physical environmental, and macro environmental all have an influence on eating behaviors. In particular, Individual patterns consists of food preference (taste), self-discipline, values, norms, beliefs (ethical, moral), state of mind (stress), body image and self-concept, dietary knowledge, time and convenience (personal priorities, meal preparation time), daily rhythm/structure, past eating habits, physical activity level, metabolism, and vitality. Social environments consist of parental control, home education, social (friends and family), and peer pressure. And physical environment consists of availability and accessibility of (health) foods and cooking supplies, and food prices (cost) (Deliens, et al., 2014).

In Thailand, one dominant cultural force that must be considered in this broad analysis of consumption patterns is Buddhism. Buddhism defines health as a state of freedom from physical or mental illness; health includes physical as well as spiritual well-being in which state the human organism discharges its functions efficiently. A study of “Health issues in *Tipiṭaka*” indicated that *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* facilitate four dimension in health promotion—physical health, mental health, Social health, and Intellectual health—and also provide balanced guideline for consuming food and well-being. In the *Suttas*, the Buddha never overlooks the importance of health in ordinary life. Over-eating and such other unhealthy dietary habits are pointed out as contributory factors toward ill-health, and the majority of *Vinaya* rules are nothing but regulations intended to preserve the health of the monks (Lapthananond, 2013). In particular, the *Bhojana Sappāya* principle and many of *Vinaya* regulations involving with food consumption are described in the *Tipiṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures to promote health. As one scholar put it, *Bhojana Sappāya* is a paradigm of well-being for the monastic life, and each temple should apply *Bhojana Sappāya* to encourage proper food selections and patterns for monks (Jayadhammo, 2015). If the *Bhojana Sappāya* was used in this manner, it would not only support their health but also their meditation practices.

This research project therefore draws upon these Buddhist resources to explore current consumption patterns in Thailand and find a solution to the problem of unhealthy food culture. The research will study the concept of *Bhojana Sappāya* in the *Tipiṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures and its application in the monastic daily life, and then propose that these Buddhist notions provide a healthy alternative for current food culture in Thai society. In sum, the study aims to show the benefits Mindfulness Consumption can have on cultural food consumption.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The goal of this study is to analyze the concept of *Bhojana Sappāya* described in the *Tipiṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures, as well as its integration in daily practice by Buddhist monks. This implies both a close textual analysis of Buddhist scriptures and a series of interviews with monk regarding the interpretation and practice

of *Bhojana Sappāya*. The subjects for the latter were *Theravāda* Buddhist monks from the “Keeping Dhamma and Vinaya Buddhist Network”, the new Thai Buddhist movement for over two decades.

The fundamental questions for this study can be summarized as follows:

1. How is the concept of *Bhojana Sappāya* described in *Tipiṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures?
2. What is the interpretation and practice of *Bhojana Sappāya* by *Theravāda* Buddhist monks i.e. “Keeping Dhamma and Vinaya Buddhist Network” – the new Thai Buddhist movement?
3. How do *Theravāda* Buddhist monks (i.e. “Keeping Dhamma and Vinaya Buddhist Network” – the new Thai Buddhist movement) utilize *Bhojana Sappāya* in daily life?

REFERENCES TO FOOD CONSUMPTION IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

Food is an aspect often mentioned in Buddha’s teachings—in both *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*—and food was integral to the Buddha’s enlightenment story as well. Recall that an ascetic Gotama only discovered the middle path, so-called the Noble Eightfold Path, after he received and ate some food and stopped pursuing enlightenment through asceticism.¹ Moreover, in the discourse of *Mahāparinibbāsutta*, a food named *Sūkaramaddhava* is mentioned as a cause of the Buddha’s death. And even at the Buddha’s funeral, food is used in a meeting where kings arranged dishes of food for incoming disciples and followers of the passed away Buddha² (D. II.). In this manner, food has a central role in the teachings and life of the Buddha. As one *Sutta* states,

“*Bhojana is a pleasure of hungry person*”³ (D. II)

In Buddhism, a newly ordained monk is told by his preceptor

1. Mahamakutrajaavidyalaya University, 1991. *Tipiṭaka and Commentaries*. Thai ed. Bangkok: Mahamakutrajaavidyalaya University. Vol. 13 p. 411.

2. Mahamakutrajaavidyalaya University, 1991. *Tipiṭaka and Commentaries*. Thai ed. Bangkok: Mahamakutrajaavidyalaya University. Vol. 13 p. 411.

3. *Ibid.* Vol. 13 p. 122.

of the four requisites or resources, that he can always depend upon. These four are: clothing (*Cīvara*), food (*Piṇḍapāta*), accommodation (*Senāsana*), and medicine (*Bhesajja*). In addition, it is stated that a monk is allowed only eight possessions - or *aṭṭhaparikhāra* - three robes, a begging-bowl, a razor, a needle, a water-strainer, and a belt in which to carry these eight requisites. A monk is not allowed to possess any other treasures, such as money, gold, jewelry, or other valuable things (Sithawatchamethi, 2007; Payutto, 2007).

Food is also reported to have cultivated the well-being of monks in the *Suttas*. The Buddha paid attention to the importance of health in daily life. He pointed out that one should give up contributory factors towards ill-health, such as over-eating and other unhealthy dietary habits. He taught about the required quantity of food and abstemious use (*Bhojane mattaññūtā*), as well as forgoing the night meal that would lead to good health (Weeraratne, 1990). In the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, it is explained that food was one factor of bodily happiness or suffering, and also fruitfulness of meditation⁴ (Paṭ. I.). There is even a story of two elder monks who were taken care of with suitable food and afterwards they attained *arahat*⁵ (Pv. II.).

In sum, food has long played a crucial role in the well-being of Buddhist monks since the first day they were ordained.

SOME FOOD TERMS AND GUIDELINES IN *TIPITAKA* AND BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

Many terms that refer to food appear in the *Tipiṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures, such as *Bhojana*, *Āhāra*, *Bhatta*. However, there are some differences among these terms. In brief, *Bhojana* means food, meal, or nourishment (Davids & Stede, 1998). *Bhojana* appears at the first order of *Āhāra* the four nutriment. These consist of *Kavaḷiṅkārahāra* or *Bhojana*, which is material food and physical nutriment; *Phassaāhāra*, which is nutriment consisting of contact or contact with nutriment; *Manosañ cetanāhāra*, which is nutriment

4. *Ibid.* Vol. 85 p. 466.

5. *Ibid.* Vol. 49 pp. 25-26.

consisting of mental volition or the mental choice as nutriment; and *Viññāṇāhāra*, which is nutriment consisting of consciousness; consciousness as nutriment. *Bhatta* is a synonym of *Bhojana* (Payutto, 2008).

Bhojana covers all kinds of food. The five kinds of food mostly mentioned are cooked rice or grains, food made from flour (*kummāsa*), barley meal (*sattu*), fish, and meat. In detail, *Bhojana* is classified into two groups: *bhojana* or *bhojanīya* (consumables) and *khādanīya* (chewables). Respectively, scholars usually translate the two as “softer food” and “harder food”. A translation closer to the essence of each category would be “staple food” and “non-staple food.” The distinction between the two is important, for it is often the deciding factor between what is and is not an offense (Payutto, 2008; Thanissaro, 1993).

Sappāya means beneficial or advantageous conditions; suitable or agreeable things; things favourable to mental development.

Bhojana Sappāya literally means suitable food for body, health promotion, easy eating and digestion. *Bhojana Sappāya* is one of the seven *Sappāya* that was described as a suitable thing or beneficial condition for mental development (Vism. 127).

PERSPECTIVES OF BHOJANA SAPPĀYA

From these definitions of *Bhojana and Bhojana Sappāya*, it can be understood that *Bhojana Sappāya* is the application of *Bhojana*, which refers not only to the material of food but also the learning, practicing, and utilizing of food in order to cultivate wellness of body and mind. However, to fully elaborate the meaning of *Bhojana Sappāya*, there are many dimensions⁶ to consider, for example:

BHOJANA SAPPĀYA AS DIETARY KNOWLEDGE

Bhojana Sappāya provides an explanation of food that is suitable to monk in various ways. To begin, various categories of food are

6. In this study I categorized *Bhojana Sappāya* into eight perspectives which are dietary knowledge, food cognition (ways of thinking), inter-relationship and communication with society, behavior, lifestyle, training and practicing, mindfulness consumption, and concentration.

described such as consumables or staple foods (*bhojanīya*);⁷ chewables or non-staple food (*khādanīya*) (Vin. I.); medicinal food or tonic (*bhesajja*) which are ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, sugar or molasses (Vin. I.); sumptuous food (*panītabhojanāni*)⁸ (Vin. IV. p. 87c); liquid food (*pānīya*) (Vin. III. p.72). Some food types are introduced such as seven kinds of grains (*dhañña*) (VinA. p. 832) and rice-gruel (*yāgu*) (Vin. I, p. 221). And there are ten unallowable types of meat, which are, namely, the flesh of human beings, elephants, horses, dogs, snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bears, and hyenas (panthers), as well as raw fish or meat (Vin. III.), and meat that a bhikkhu sees, hears, or suspects was killed specially for him (Vin. III.).

Living plants are also prohibited to be damaged⁹ (Vin. I.). The *Vibhaṅga* defines living plants as vegetation arising from any of five sources: 1) from bulbs, rhizomes, or tubers (e.g., potatoes, tulips), 2) from cuttings or stakes (e.g., willows, rose bushes), 3) from joints (e.g., sugar cane, bamboo), 4) from runners (e.g., strawberries, couch grass), or 5) from seeds (e.g., corn, beans). And of course, the consumption of alcohol or fermented liquor¹⁰ (Vin. I.) is prohibited for monks.

In addition, there are the explanations about the time to keep food and its consumption. Each of the four basic classes of edibles—food, juice drinks, the five tonics, and medicines—has its life span, the period during which it may be kept and consumed. Food may be kept and consumed until noon of the day it was received. Juice drinks may be kept and consumed until dawn of the following day. The five tonics may be kept and consumed until dawn of the seventh day after they are received. Medicines may be kept and consumed throughout one's life.

7. Mahamakutrajavidyalaya University, 1991. *Tipiṭaka and Commentaries*. Thai ed. Bangkok: Mahamakutrajavidyalaya University. Vol. 4 p. 501.

8. Fish and meat were considered as sumptuous food along with ghee, fresh butter, oil, honey, molasses, milk and curd.

9. Mahamakutrajavidyalaya University, 1991. *Tipiṭaka and Commentaries*. Thai ed. Bangkok: Mahamakutrajavidyalaya University. Vol. 4 p. 267.

10. *Ibid.* Vol. 4 p. 633.

METHODS

The methodology used in this study was divided into three parts. The first part, from observation and answering short questionnaire of personal details, aimed to present an overview of the respondents by describing general social contexts. The second part, from the interviews, detailed the monks' interpretation of *Bhojana Sappāya*. The third part, on the practicing on *Bhojana Sappāya* in daily life and in meditating was elaborated.

FINDINGS

Bhojana Sappāya on Food Knowledge and Food Cognition

In my interviews with monks they also indicated that there are many words for 'food' in the *Suttas* which mean different things in different contexts. They explained that one must therefore be sensitive to these differences when considering *Tipiṭaka* in relation to food. They stated that *Sappāya* was suitable or important to learning and practicing *dhamma*.

"When thinking about "cooked rice" it refers to disciplines about eating food by Vinayapiṭaka, but it refers to essence of rice that bring energy to the body by Abhidhammapiṭka".

"Sappāya is suitable. Bhojana Sappāya is such a food that I feel comfortable after taking. I observed that oily or spicy food make me sleepy and sore in the eyes so that I could not ready or meditating".

"Bhojana Sappāya is consumed food that make my body accessible, not slot, not dizzy, not any pain in body in other word, bodily comfortable after consumption".

The monks mentioned that the purpose of consumption is simplicity, desiring little (*Appicchata*), satisfaction with whatever is one's own (*Santuṭṭhī*), relief of hunger or suffering, and prolonging or benefiting the body. They also mentioned that the concept of moderate eating (*Bhojane mattaññū*) that is taught with *Bhojana Sappāya*.

"Goals of consumption are (1) to be a person who lives with easy living and consuming because monks live by other people; (2) to relieve hunger suffering; and to support well-functionality of body, to prevent factor of illness".

“...why do we have to eat? It is because we suffer with hungry. We eat to relieve suffering. Bhojane mattaññuta is principle to be considered. Know to how moderate in eating. Both of eating too much or less cause suffering. I had an experience to be nervous when eating too less, and to be sleepy when eating too much...”

From these statements, we can see that the monks in the network have a right understanding and a right thought in learning and practicing *Bhojana Sappāya*. They understand the central ideas about food and food consumption relevant to what it described in *Tipiṭaka* and commentaries. They also know which kind of food is suitable for their body and put the *Dhamma* into practice in their daily life, knowing how the *Dhamma* function in relation to both body and mind.

***Bhojana Sappāya* on Training and Practices, Mindfulness of consumption, and Concentration**

The monks felt that *Bhojana Sappāya* should be integrated with discipline in *Vinaya* and practice in the present moment, and geared towards the purification and the cessation of suffering.

“Bhojana Sappāya is not merely focus on food. Food is an instrument like a raft used as vehicle crossing a river. Bhojana Sappāya should be in a framework of Pāṭimokha and Sense-Restrain (Indriyasamvarasīla) on food”.

“The purification which is a goal practicing should have right intention which consists of (1)observing the Fundamental Precepts (Pāṭimokkha); (2)having Mindfulness (Sati) for controlling the six senses under Pāṭimokkha; (3) Purity of Conduct connected with Livelihood (Ājivapārisuddhisīla); and (4) having wise attention (Yonisomanasikāra) when involving with every phenomenon”.

With a background in learning of *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* from the *Tipiṭaka* and practicing of *Rūpa-Nāma* meditation, the monks can take food consumption as their meditation object. They try to do activities on food with concentration and mindfulness. With *Bhojana Sappāya*, food consumption turns to into an exercise for the monks to achieve right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness.

Application and Benefits of *Bhojana Sappāya* to daily life

The monks emphasized that *Bhojana Sappāya* does not refer only to food but also the integration of discipline and practice. They suggested that *Bhojana Sappāya* was the physical and mental practice which leads to the cessation of suffering.

“Normally, it might be understood that Bhojana is food, and Bhojana Sappāya is suitable food. Until we have studied, we will understand that Bhojana Sappāya is not only about consumed food. It should be integrated Sila, Samādhi, and Paññā as a whole. This is the way to bring Dhamma Vinaya into practice. Totally, Bhojana Sappāya is the practicing of body and mind that cultivated purity of conduct consisting in the restrain of the senses, and got mindfulness consumption as a result. This is for a purity and cessation of suffering”.

The monks recognized that the practice of *Bhojana Sappāya* brings benefits to individual, *Sangha* society, and lay society.

“Practicing Bhojana Sappāya makes me be confident and faith in the Buddha much more”.

“Practicing Bhojana Sappāya of a monk cultivates faith of layman by influence of having good knowledge and understanding”.

“As the Buddha recommended the considering on oneself, what is a benefit of eating? The answer is to protect the return of old illness and prevent the incidence of new disease; to be comfortable to make purification; to live with simplicity; to be a benefit for oneself, for a wholeness, and for religion. These are the only benefits of food. Food is not for decorating the body. Food makes us feel about the burdensome of feeding the body with Bhojana Sappāya”.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research studied the concept of *Bhojana Sappāya* described in *Tiṭṭaka* and Buddhist scriptures, and the interpretation and practice of *Bhojana Sappāya* by *Theravāda* Buddhist monks. The research also analyzed the utilization of *Bhojana Sappāya* in the daily life of *Theravāda* Monks. Qualitative methods were employed to the study for data collection by documentary research and fieldwork research. Seven participants who are Thai *Theravāda* monks in “Keeping Dhamma and Vinaya Buddhist Network”—the

new Thai Buddhist movement—were interviewed as data. Research was conducted in four provinces of Thailand.

The results revealed that *Bhojana Sappāya* in *Theravāda* Buddhist scriptures is the basis of food culture for monks, informing the norms, beliefs, values, and goals of their consumption patterns. *Theravāda* Buddhist monks learn and analyze *Bhojana Sappāya* as the Eightfold Path and *Sīla-Samādhi-Paññā*, and put it into practice with Mindfulness meditation, whose goal is the cessation of suffering. They utilize *Bhojana Sappāya* as a guideline for consuming food for overall—physical, mental, social, and intellectual health. Furthermore, the results indicate that the key motivational factor for success in the utilization of *Bhojana Sappāya* is attempting to attain the cessation of suffering; the learning and understanding of their *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*; the practicing of Mindfulness Meditation; and the social support of the laity and monastic community (*Sangha*).

The study reveals that the concept of *Bhojana Sappāya* and the interpretation and practice of *Bhojana Sappāya* is concurrent with the *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition. *Bhojana Sappāya* is the principle related to food consumption that the Buddha taught to his followers, especially monks who were seeking the cessation of suffering (Gethin, 1998). *Bhojana Sappāya* appears in many places in the *Tipiṭaka*, but mainly in the *Paṭimokkha*, which is the prerequisite for all monks in *Sangha*.

In the *Suttas*, *Bhojana* is discussed in relation to various kinds of foods with guidelines for monks to manage and practice mindfulness with the food. By learning about *Bhojana Sappāya*, monks develop the right view and right understanding on how to manage food consumption. Moreover, they learn to cultivate a good relationship and communication with society about food. By training and practicing, *Bhojana Sappāya* encourages good manners and habits for receiving, eating, and dealing with food. *Bhojana Sappāya* leads the way to living a lifestyle congruent with the *Sangha* and the right livelihood of the Eightfold Path.

From the interviews, the monks indicated that they all want to relieve suffering, and this is in accordance with Buddhist precepts. As the Buddha said, “*Bhojana* is a pleasure for a hungry person”. It is

encouraging that the monks sought to embody this attitude in their daily practice and were aware of the stakes.

Now clearly, consuming food is one way to relieve the suffering, as eating can make us happy, but consuming food with ignorance can also cause more suffering. According to the law of Dependent Origination, the path leading to cessation of suffering starts from right understanding (*Sammādit̥ṭhi*). Ignorance (*Avijjā*) causes the wrong thought (*San̥khāra*). As the result, unwholesome consciousness (*Viññāṇā*) or perception of mind and matter (*Nāma-Rūpa*) through the six sense-bases (*Salāyatana*) happens when an individual comes in contact (*Phassa*) with food. Later, we crave (*Taṇha*) the food again and this desire can produce suffering. The attachment or clinging (*Upādāna*) to food becomes (*Bhava*) a bad habit or health risk. Finally, this procedure leads the individual to the circle of life – rebirth (*Jāti*), decay and death (*Jarā-mar̥ṇa*) (Thammasaran, 2005). In the same way, the law of Dependent Origination can be implied when individuals have the wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration.

However, according to Buddhism, if the monks practice *Bhojana Sappāya* along with the Noble Eightfold path they will have the well-being and ability to release themselves from suffering. The Noble Eightfold path is “the path” working together to purify the craving and ignorance, which are the main root of the problem. In *Visuddhimagga*, the path of purification is wrapped up into the practice of ethical conduct (*Sīla*), mental discipline (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Paññā*), which leads the practitioner to the same goal of cessation of suffering (Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, 1999). The monks who practice *Bhojana Sappāya* and accomplish it with *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā* will have the suitable perspectives on food consumption. Elaborately, the monks will have the suitable understanding in dietary knowledge which effects the process of considering and determining proper food consumption. At the same time, this will lead to a good relationship with society, better behavior, a simple lifestyle, moderation in consumption, and the good manners.

The central claim of this study is that *Bhojana Sappāya* gives the norms, beliefs, values, and goals of food consumption to *Theravāda*

Buddhist monks, and this was born out by the results. Theoretically, this observation is aligned with Durkheim's (1982) and Malinowski's (1946) work on the holistic nature of cultural processes.

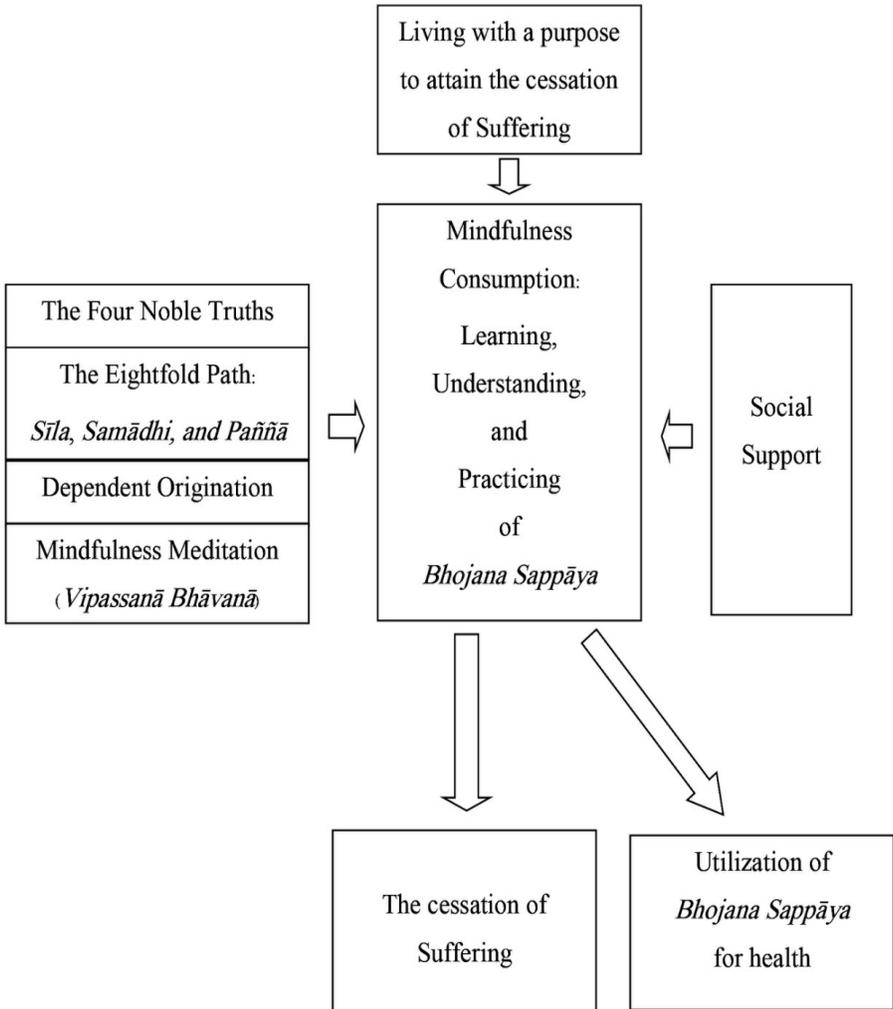
Accordingly, the results showed that the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* functioned together in a whole process, and therefore confirmed this claim. All cultural aspects are necessary to help monks reach for the cessation of suffering. This is consistent with the work of Lim, et al. (2009), all of whom have also argued that culture is complete system of values interconnected with consumption patterns. The findings therefore suggest study that *Theravāda* food culture can and should function a complete system of norms, beliefs, values, and goals for *Theravāda* Buddhist monks.

In the work of Lim, et al. (2009), it was also documented that healthy food consumption was connected to physical well-being, spiritual well-being, emotional well-being, and social well-being. The findings of this study also confirm this in relation to *Theravāda* Buddhist monks, for when the monks utilize the practices of *Bhojana Sappāya* it can improve their physical, mental, social, and intellectual health.

However, as noted at the outset of this study, *Theravāda* Buddhist monks currently have not fully put *Bhojana Sappāya* in to practice and many have unhealthy food patterns. The monks that were interviewed confirmed the importance of *Bhojana Sappāya* and their intention to carry it out in their daily practice as passive consumers, but this attitude needs to be implemented on a broad social level in Thailand. *Theravāda* Buddhist monks need social support regarding food. However, simply appealing to the laity to give the monks healthier food is not enough. Rather, monks need to educate each other and increase awareness of the foundational principle of *Bhojana Sappāya* for the cessation of suffering. This means that the Buddha's teachings on the subject of food consumption needs to be shared more widely and incorporated more broadly in the individual lives of monks across Thailand. As a fundamental practice, *Theravāda* Buddhist monks should accept food from the laity that is suitable for the body and mind, in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha, and with the aim of the cessation of suffering.

Technically speaking, this should be an easy goal for monks to attain because, as this study also indicated, the practice of *Bhojana Sappāya* contributes to the cessation of suffering and is central to the teachings in the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* (see the figure 1). So, correcting unhealthy food consumption patterns by following *Bhojana Sappāya* should be a central aim for monks in Thai society.

Figure 1: The process, supporting factors, and results of mindfulness consumption



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Abbreviations

A.	<i>Aṅguttaranikāya</i>
D.	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
DhA.	<i>Dhammapadaaṭṭhakathā</i>
Dhs.	<i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī (Abhidhamma)</i>
M.	<i>Majjhimanikāya (3 Vols.)</i>
MA.	<i>Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakatha (Papañcasūdanī)</i>
Paṭ.	<i>Paṭṭhāna (Abhidhamma)</i>
Pv.	<i>Petavatthu (Khuddhakanikāya)</i>
Vbh.	<i>Vibhaṅga (Abhidhamma)</i>
VbhA.	<i>Vibhaṅgavaṅṅanā Aṭṭhakathā (Samohavinodanī)</i>
Vin.	<i>Vinaya Piṭaka (5 Vol.)</i>
VinA.	<i>Vinaya Piṭaka Aṭṭhakatha (Samantapāsādikā)</i>
Vism.	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
VismT.	<i>Visuddhimagga Mahāṭikā (paramatthamañjusa)</i>

Other abbreviations

e.g. *exempli gratia* / for example

ed. edited by

etc. *et cetera* / and others

i.e. *id est* / that is

Ibid. *Ibiden* / in the same book

p(p.) page(s)

Examples:

D.II.290

D. = *Dīghanikāya*

II = Chapter

290 = Page number

