



# An Integrated Buddhist Mechanism to Promote Self-Esteem among Elderly Volunteer Groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand

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## Abstract

The research entitled “An integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteer groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand” has three objectives: 1) to study activities and Buddhist principles that promote the value of the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, 2) to develop participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, and 3) to expand the impact of participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province. This is mixed-methods research that combined documentary research aimed at analyzing Buddhist-integrated mechanisms that promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in the Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, and qualitative research by using in-depth interviews with 15 key informants and focus group discussions with 9 elderly volunteers, including elderly club members, community leaders, and elderly volunteers in the area who were selected. Action research was conducted by collecting data from 25 participants in Buddhist-integrated activities aimed at enhancing self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province; the data was recorded to explain before and after the activities. The research findings indicate that, 1) the implementation of activities to create a space that ensures honesty and sincerity in working together found that studying activities and Buddhist principles resulted in the elderly feeling like part of the community. Promoting self-esteem can be achieved by supporting the elderly volunteer groups in having opportunities to make decisions and participate in managing various activities. The research outcomes were indicated by applying the Four Brahmaviharas, the Four Bases of Spiritual Power, and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, helping the elderly manage daily life problems to promote mental well-being, self-esteem, and happiness in daily life. 2) The development of participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to promote self-esteem among the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, found that the implementation of activities led to effective learning encompassing physical, mental, intellectual, and social well-being. The elderly gained more self-esteem and enjoyed a variety of

activities, as follows: Activity 1: Dhamma Awakening, Activity 2: Buddhist Mindfulness, and Activity 3: Elderly Volunteer Power for Happiness. 3) The expansion of the participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance the self-esteem of volunteer seniors in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, revealed that the approach to expanding the activities promoting self-esteem among the senior volunteer group resulted in the senior gaining skills learned from the activities. The activities of teaching mindfulness practice and ensuring continuity and ease of understanding, making the seniors feel more valued. The seniors received encouragement to avoid negligence in life and provided positive feedback, expressing a desire for more sessions. The expansion of Buddhist mechanisms for senior activities to other districts in Nakhon Pathom Province and other provinces is a strong and important network-building effort to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices in developing activities for seniors. The main steps are as follows: 1) Building understanding and participation 2) Developing activities according to Buddhist principles 3) Networking with various organizations 4) Monitoring and evaluation 5) Continuous publicity and expansion.

## Keywords

Integrated Buddhist Mechanism, Elderly Volunteer, Self-Esteem

## 1. Introduction

Thailand has seen a strong increase in the number of elderly people, whether in families, communities, or public areas. The future forecasts show that the proportion of the elderly population will increase continuously. In the next 10 years, Thailand will become a “complete aging society” when the population aged 60 years and over is 20 percent of the total population. The definition of the elderly as 60 years and over in Thailand has been used for a long time and is the age at which people start receiving welfare and benefits from the government. At present, Thailand has become an aging society, with more than 10 percent of the elderly according to the criteria of the United Nations. From the projection of the population of Thailand between 2010 and 2040, it was found that the number and proportion of the elderly population have continuously increased, while the number and proportion of the working-age population have also continuously decreased (Rosarin Gray et al., 2013: 27). The increase in the elderly population, as mentioned above, has resulted in the elderly being a topic of great interest to academics, the government, various sectors, and the elderly in Thai society. However, most research on the issue of the elderly in Thai society tends to focus on policies and legal measures regarding the elderly, medical and public health services, and assistance for the elderly by government agencies. Including the provision of care for the elderly by the family and community. These studies are based on the assumption that the elderly are “dependent” and “recipients” and must be cared for by the state, family, and community. In addition, if we consider the care for the elderly from the experience of developed countries such as the Netherlands or Sweden, we find that the state faces the problem of shouldering a large amount of public expenses for health and care for the elderly and tries to find other alternatives for caring for the elderly (Ganesh, Kamala., 2005: 116-158). Therefore, it can be seen that the welfare state system that provides financial care for the elderly in the form of a universal old age pension and care by state-subsidized institutional care and/or other public health systems may not be sufficient and may not be the most appropriate approach for caring for the elderly in Thai society. Therefore, it can be seen that physical or biological changes, coupled with the presence of chronic diseases in the elderly, affect the minds and emotions of the elderly. When the body deteriorates, the ability to do certain activities or tasks decreases, which affects the minds and emotions of the elderly, causing them to feel worthless, lonely, sad, and discouraged and needing attention from those around them, especially family members and children. In addition, this is an age when they have to face losses, whether it be the loss of a loved one, a career, a role, a position, a job, or income, which also affects the minds and emotions of the elderly. In addition, the results of the survey on the mental health of the elderly found that the average mental health score according to the assessment form of the Department of Mental Health is lower than the population in other ages. There is also a proportion of people with mental health levels lower than the standard criteria for general mental health (National Statistical Office, 2024: online). The elderly do not only want to be on the receiving end of their children or society. In fact, they try to help themselves as much as they can, whether it is in terms of career, income, or living conditions. They will rely on their children only when they can no longer do so. Nevertheless, they are willing to help their families and society to the best of their ability, whether it is in terms of physical strength. Wisdom, skills, and advice as much as you can give; many people who have retired may still have passion, have high knowledge, ability, and experience. Many may have been teachers, lecturers, doctors, nurses, or leaders in law, accounting, management, or administration. After retirement, they may still want to be useful to society and are satisfied with the work they will do. People who think that they can still be useful to society and are still healthy and want to continue doing things should be able to continue doing so when they are old or retired. Free time is easy to find and abundant. Free time activities, whether for recreation, learning new things, or providing services to others, are important and bring satisfaction, making them lively and meaningful. Retiring without a goal will lead to boredom and isolation from society. In fact, the body and mind develop according to the stimulus of various activities. Therefore, it is good for the elderly to have activities to stimulate their lives to flourish. Therefore, the elderly with potential (action ageing) have used their potential to benefit society, which is considered to increase the self-esteem of the elderly, which may be in the form of grouping together to do activities for the benefit of the community and society. Or it may be called “volunteers” or “volunteers.” These groups will be in the form of clubs or clubs, which may focus on the readiness of the elderly. Focusing on promoting the development of the

potential and abilities of the elderly is a preparation for entering a "complete aging society" in no more than 10 years from now. By looking at the characteristics of a society that is ready with the elderly, who are the main force driving the economy and society completely, along with "elderly prejudice," which has permanently disappeared from society. "Elderly society" is a society that creates value for the elderly with the abilities, potential, and development of society. That is, looking beyond the physical conditions that change over time and turning to focus on the "value" of the abilities and potential of the elderly. With a mind that respects and fully accepts the value of being human, the elderly join hands to take responsibility for society together in order for society to be truly sustainable. Volunteer work is one way to help reduce and solve problems in thinking that society as a whole sees the elderly as part of the social problem. Therefore, a volunteer group of the elderly has been created to make it clear to the general public that the elderly still have enough physical strength, morale, and intelligence, and the ability in various aspects, being selfish for the benefit of others, society, and the country, ready to volunteer to sacrifice physical and mental strength, money, property, and time for the benefit of the public, seeing the value, reducing the encroachment on public resources, and wanting to help with determination and good intentions (Chuttharat Saengthong, 2017: 1). The promotion of self-esteem among the elderly through the participation of volunteer elderly groups will focus on developing the quality of life of the elderly to create fairness and justice in society and to make the elderly have a good quality of life. These three issues are in harmony with the current Thai society, which has a gap in income distribution, increasing inequality in every aspect of society, an education system that focuses on competition, and an environment that is a threat to life and health. Importantly, villagers feel that they cannot access justice services, lack basic knowledge and understanding about justice, and even feel that the law is not something close to them, but a technical matter that cannot be relied on by themselves. They must rely only on those who know. Development that lacks strengthening the foundation from the bottom up and methods that rely excessively on the bureaucracy and lack real participation processes result in villagers experiencing development in terms of material and constructional development, including technology from the globalization of capitalism that is tied to commercial interests, both domestically and by multinational corporations. This type of exposure causes issues of justice, a just society, and a good quality of life to be viewed with values that are covered with illusions. These illusions therefore create problems of quality of life, a lack of equal and equitable opportunities to earn a living, problems of the quality of education, and problems of distribution of ownership of housing and farmland. The uncertainty and unfairness of agricultural product prices, including access to public health and health services, all of which lead to problems of having a good quality of life (Foundation of the Research and Development Institute for the Elderly, 2020: 2). In Buddhism, there are Buddhist principles that promote self-esteem in the elderly, emphasizing the development of quality of life to live happily in the present. These principles teach self-reliance, create stability, create wealth, and be a good person. They are practices that bring benefits to oneself in the present by practicing to obtain various factors for a good life. Current benefits are the starting point or immediate goal. They are benefits that are easily seen and understood in daily life. They are common and common things that are generally found, such as wealth, honor, praise, work, property, status, honor, and a happy family life, etc. In Buddhism, the acquisition of these things must be done honestly and justly, not by taking advantage of others. And the giving must be used correctly and appropriately for oneself and one's subordinates, and happiness must occur together (Phra Thammakitak, 2013: 538). Therefore, the integrated Buddhist mechanism is being used to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly people in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, which is something that the research team is interested in. He commented that there should be activities to promote self-worth in the elderly, emphasizing the four bases of influence, the four principles of meditation, and the four principles of divine abode to enhance the participation of volunteer elderly groups, emphasizing the use of various integrated Buddhist activities to heal the mind, train meditation, practice Dhamma, and apply Dhamma principles to solve problems and use them as examples in practice to enhance the physical, mental, and social development of the elderly group to achieve maximum efficiency.

### Research Questions

- 1) What are the activities and Buddhist principles to promote the value of the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province?
- 2) How to develop participatory integrated Buddhist activities to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province?
- 3) How to expand the results of participatory integrated Buddhist activities to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province?

### Research objectives

- 1) To study activities and Buddhist principles to promote the value of the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province
- 2) To develop participatory integrated Buddhist activities to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province
- 3) To expand the results of participatory integrated Buddhist activities to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province

## 2. Literature Review

The research entitled “Buddhist integrated mechanisms to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province”, the researchers have reviewed related theories and concepts, including:

### 2.1 Concepts and Theories about the Elderly

The socioeconomic circumstances of the elderly are the root source of their issues. Traditionally, in big families, the older members of the family served as leaders, imparting wisdom and fostering their children's growth. They were also able to enjoy acceptance, worship, and respect. Thai society is now industrial, competitive, self-interested, and less dependent than it was in the past. The majority of social perceptions originate from outside sources, which makes older people feel less significant, unaccepted, and uncared for by their offspring. Not only that, but the elderly who were formerly the family's primary provider and caretaker ended up becoming dependents. Being more of a receiver

From a survey of data from documents, books, and research, it can be concluded that the elderly have problems in various aspects, which can be divided as follows:

1. *Physical problems:* It was found that when people get older, the physical condition in various parts of the body deteriorates, whether it is the brain or cells, which are prone to various diseases. When they get sick,
2. *Mental problems:* Partly resulting from physical problems and social problems, the elderly are often left alone or alone with their spouses. The elderly often do not receive attention from their children. This is because nowadays children tend to work in the city.
3. *Social problems:* The social conditions have changed from before, whether in terms of families, which used to be nuclear families, they have become more extended families, causing the elderly to lack people close to them to consult with. The elderly are seen as meaningless in society, unable to do anything when they are old. The elderly's role in society has been reduced, causing the elderly to feel even more worthless.
4. *Economic problems:* It was found that many elderly people are unable to earn extra income, causing them to be a burden to their children and the state, which must take care of them. There will also be a significant number of elderly people whose children do not care about taking care of them. This makes it difficult for these elderly to live a fulfilling life in their later years.
5. *Environmental problems:* The social and cultural patterns of Thailand are changing. Developments in modern technology, including Western culture, play a major role in Thai society. As a result of these changes, Thai children will be less grateful, indulge in modern technology, and have new beliefs. On the contrary, the elderly, who are mostly ignorant and uneducated, are not open to these changes in technology, and still cling to their old lifestyles, which will affect their lives in modern society (Kasem Tantiphalachiva and Kullaya Tantiphalachiva, 1985: 80).

### 2.2 Concepts and Theories about Volunteerism

The challenges faced by the elderly are associated with the findings of Watcharin Semamon (2013: 37). His research identified six essential needs of older adults:

1. *Physical Needs:* These include the four fundamental necessities: age-appropriate nutrition, adequate housing, suitable clothing, and access to medical care when ill. Additionally, there is a requirement for close personal care and the maintenance of good physical health.
2. *Mental Needs:* The elderly desire to live harmoniously with their children, akin to the traditional Thai family structure, which emphasizes love, care, and respect. They seek acceptance as family members, the companionship of friends, recognition of their societal contributions, and opportunities for social engagement.
3. *Economic Needs:* Financial stability is crucial, as older adults wish to have employment and income that alleviate the financial burden on their families and society.
4. *Independence:* There is a strong desire among the elderly to minimize their reliance on others, aspiring to lead lives that allow for independent thought and action, similar to their peers.
5. *Knowledge:* The elderly express a need for new knowledge and experiences to adapt to the changes brought about by aging and their surrounding environment.

Ramphan Sirichantan (2012: 15) noted that the needs of older adults stem from the transformations associated with aging. The most significant requirement is their ability to adapt to these changes—physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. This adjustment necessitates support from various stakeholders, including the elderly themselves, their families, communities, and the government, which plays a critical role in formulating policies and plans to address these needs. Ultimately, the elderly aspire to lead fulfilling lives, characterized by satisfaction derived from having their physical and mental needs met within a socially accepted environment and value system. In essence, quality of life is defined by the fulfillment of these needs.

Communication is the heart of human life. Nobody can live without communication. In Buddhism, it is mentioned about the act of sacrifice for the public good as “volunteerism”. The Buddha mentioned this principle called “Vatthi” or “Ariyawatthi” which means the principle of developing the noble one. It means that if there is progress as he stated, it means that Buddhists have progressed in their practice and hope to reach the goal of Buddhism. There are 5 principles of progress: faith, morality, learning, generosity, and wisdom. In summary, the word “volunteerism” is a mental characteristic of a person who is composed of kindness and public consciousness or consciousness who sacrifices physical strength, mental strength, and wisdom for the benefit of the public good (Phra Phromkunaphon, 2009: 10).



Volunteerism is an action with a spirit that has love, concern, and compassion, doing for society, including having morality, ethics, and not doing anything that causes social problems. Having a good mind, creative thinking is a virtue, speaking well and aiming to do good deeds that benefit the public as the main principle, not destroying or harming anyone, society, culture, country, and the environment (Chaiwat Suthirat, 2009: 17). It can be said that the group that works as a volunteer has been around for a long time, but it is only a small group. However, the large volunteer network that is a serious organization of Thailand was born from the tragic event of the great tsunami disaster in Thailand on December 26, 2004, in which we lost a lot of property and lives. At that time, there were volunteers from many countries who came to help each other, whether it was the government or private sectors. The general public mobilized to help in every way, whether it was helping the survivors who were injured or damaged, salvaging the remains of the deceased, cleaning up and improving the disaster site, which was considered the starting point, stimulating Thai people to have compassion for their fellow human beings and reaching out to help each other with their hearts without expecting anything in return. Since then, there have been groups of people and various organizations joining together to continue the beautiful power of kindness this time, becoming a volunteer network that aims to cooperate to help and create sustainable benefits for Thai society (Sustainable Business Development Institute, 2013: 8).

To be a volunteer, there must be a part that is consciousness, a matter of the mind, a feeling and thought within an individual that can arise and arise through learning. When consciousness arises, it is difficult to stop or disappear. People who have consciousness, which is usually a good consciousness, will behave appropriately according to consciousness and use their consciousness for the benefit of various things. Consciousness that should be created in children and youth must have 3 aspects:

- 1) Self-Consciousness is a consciousness for self-development, making oneself a more complete person, such as diligence, perseverance, responsibility, interest in learning, and in terms of ethics, including morality and ethics.
- 2) Other-Oriented Consciousness is a consciousness of the relationship between people in a group or society, such as love, sympathy, and generosity.
- 3) Social or Public Consciousness is a consciousness that realizes the importance of cooperation or consideration for others who live in the same relationship, such as economic consciousness (sufficient economy, mutual assistance, self-reliance, and competition in the global society), political consciousness (politics, progressive democracy, public participation, environmental awareness, health awareness, cultural awareness (Sompong Singhaphon, 1999: 15-16).

### 2.3 Organizing Activities to Promote the Quality Of Life of the Elderly

Organizing activities to promote the quality of life of the elderly includes:

- 1) Mental-intellectual-social activities to promote the health of Thais to have physical, mental, intellectual and social well-being by using the Tri-Power strategy to drive the work by creating an environment conducive to good health and changing individual behaviors. Promoting health understanding is one of the main tools to support the creation of an environment, adjusting attitudes and health behaviors of the public to reduce risk factors and promote factors for good health, including contributing to the creation of society and pushing policies that support behavioral change (Health Learning Center, 2020: online).
- 2) Meditation training activities for the elderly emphasize mindfulness training according to the principles referred to from the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. The goal is to help experts and interested persons understand and practice appropriately, such as the principles of Dhamma, not clinging to methods or beliefs, but being open to the different opinions of others. Learning and practicing oneself are lifelong processes. For understanding reality, managing anger, resentment by seeing and understanding the causes, including taking care of the body with respect and understanding the importance of preserving life force
- 3) Self-esteem promotion activities will focus on the characteristics of confidence and self-esteem that come from confidence in one's own worth, confidence in one's ability to do anything successfully according to satisfaction (Nathaniel Branden, 1994: 110,125). It is an explanation of a person who has self-esteem will be a person who is proud of himself and has self-confidence, feels that he is strong, capable, has potential, is useful and important to society. On the contrary, if a person does not see his own worth, he will often have anxiety, inferiority complex, is weak, cannot help himself, perceives himself in a bad way, is discouraged, thinks that he is useless, hopeless, and evaluates himself lower than others, which will affect the adjustment of that person. In addition, people who have low self-esteem tend to talk to others, have a weak mental state, cannot accept criticism from others and reject that criticism. This is because criticism makes him feel that he is inferior and is not accepted by others, causing him to lack self-confidence and not succeed in life (Sudjai Tangsongsawat, 1989).

### 3. Research Methodology

The researchers studied documents and related research to obtain data according to the research objectives. The researchers decided to use mixed methods research. The literature was reviewed from documents and research related to "Buddhist integrated mechanisms to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly people in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province" to compile knowledge and create a conceptual framework for research and data collection, consisting of qualitative research with specific target groups and collecting data through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and

action research with participants. The research team used a set of activities to provide knowledge about the integrated Buddhist mechanisms to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteer people in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, by creating and organizing activities for interested elderly people to join the training. The research processes are as follows:

1. *Documentary Research:* The research team determined the scope of the research study by studying primary and secondary documents, including research, thesis, books, and textbooks. In the issue of collecting basic data on the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem of the elderly volunteer group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, consisting of promoting the development of activities, integrated Buddhist activities to promote networking and organizing activities for the elderly.

2. *Qualitative Research:* The researchers have designed the qualitative research which is a guideline to promote self-esteem of the elderly volunteer group, which is appropriate in the context of the current elderly in order to keep up with the modern era of self-esteem. By using the data points from collecting data from organizing activities as issues in in-depth interviews to find and develop activities to promote self-esteem of the elderly with the participation of the elderly volunteer group and confirming the data by means of focus groups and to expand the results of activities to promote self-esteem of the elderly volunteer group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

3. *Action Research:* The research team has determined the field research to find out the concepts, principles, backgrounds, relationships, problems, obstacles and processes to create new practices and new perspectives in the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem of the elderly volunteer group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province. The research results can apply the activities to promote self-esteem of the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province. The research was divided into 2 phases as follows:

*Phase 1:* Conduct a documentary research study, which is a step to study the concept of the integrated Buddhist mechanism activity model to promote self-esteem of the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province by analyzing documents and research related to "Buddhist integrated mechanism to promote self-esteem of the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province" by studying documents and synthesizing research along with activities related to the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem of the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

*Phase 2:* Data collection by using the activity set, providing relative knowledge to expand the results of the activities to promote self-esteem of the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province by organizing activities with the general elderly in the area, a total of 25 people who were interested in participating in this activity.

4. *Reflection and Feedback:* It is a process, results and impacts, whether problems, obstacles and successes, by group discussions, mutual learning exchanges, in-depth interviews and behavioral observations, including using an interview form to measure opinions on participating in activities that create researcher team collected the data from those reflections and analyzed the content to expand the results of the activities to promote self-esteem in the volunteer elderly group. Therefore, the results were presented in various formats such as data descriptions, diagrams, tables, and mind maps after the activities were completed and the data collection was complete.

## 4. Research Scope

### 4.1 Research Content

The research entitled "The integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province". The research team studied theoretical concepts and theories from related document and data to the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers, including books, documents, journals, magazines, printed media, and the primary source, Tripitaka.

### 4.2 Sample/Key Informant

The researcher team selected 24 key informants as following

1. In-depth Interview; The researchers selected Purposive Sampling method with 15 elderly sample who have knowledge about volunteer
2. Focus-Group Discussion; The researchers selected Purposive Sampling method which composed of 3 elderly club member, 3 community, and 3 elderly volunteers. Totally 9 sample.
3. Participants selected as examples of participating in the activity, Integrated Buddhist Mechanism to Promote Self-Esteem in Volunteer Elderly Group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province for 2 days, 25 participants

### 4.3 Research Area

The research team have selected the area and determined the data source for the study by using the area of the elderly community of Wat Hom Kret, Wat Tha Phut, Wat Rai Khing and Wat Don Wai, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province. The research team has seen that the area has the target elderly group that can provide useful information. In addition, the researcher team has a network in the target group that can access the key information, making it useful for researching, presenting and, suitable for the study.

### 4.4 Research Scope of Time

The research team will be conducted throughout the fiscal year 2024.

## 5. Data Analysis

### 5.1 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data analysis from in-depth interviews has the following steps:

1. Data obtained from document study using Content Analysis Techniques, presenting data in a descriptive manner.
2. Data obtained from interviews using induction, by organizing and systematically classifying data, then interpreting, connecting relationships, and drawing conclusions from the collected data. This is done simultaneously with data collection in order to study various issues in depth. When any issues are not clear from the analysis, data will be collected on those issues to answer the main questions according to the research objectives, and supplemented with Focus Group meetings as a guideline for integrated Buddhist mechanisms to promote self-esteem among volunteer elderly people in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.
3. Data analysis in terms of activities by the research team has determined the analysis of qualitative data by means of content analysis from the results of the activities and the training formats. The research team has collected data by participation with the activities by means of collection from observation forms, activity content, and summary of the results of the activities in order to observe the differences between before and after the activities.

## 6. Research Results

The research entitled “An integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteer groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province” has three objectives: 1) to study activities and Buddhist principles that promote the value of the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, 2) to develop participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, and 3) to expand the impact of participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province. This is mixed-methods research that combined documentary research aimed at analyzing Buddhist-integrated mechanisms that promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in the Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, and qualitative research by using in-depth interviews with 15 key informants and focus group discussions with 9 elderly volunteers, including elderly club members, community leaders, and elderly volunteers in the area who were selected. Action research was conducted by collecting data from 25 participants in Buddhist-integrated activities aimed at enhancing self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province; the data was recorded to explain before and after the activities.

The research findings indicate that

1. The implementation of activities to create a space that ensures honesty and sincerity in working together found that studying activities and Buddhist principles resulted in the elderly feeling like part of the community. Promoting self-esteem can be achieved by supporting the elderly volunteer groups in having opportunities to make decisions and participate in managing various activities. The research outcomes were indicated by applying the Four Brahmaviharas, the Four Bases of Spiritual Power, and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, helping the elderly manage daily life problems to promote mental well-being, self-esteem, and happiness in daily life.
2. The development of participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to promote self-esteem among the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, found that the implementation of activities led to effective learning encompassing physical, mental, intellectual, and social well-being. The elderly gained more self-esteem and enjoyed a variety of activities, as follows: Activity 1: Dhamma Awakening, Activity 2: Buddhist Mindfulness, and Activity 3: Elderly Volunteer Power for Happiness.
3. The expansion of the participatory Buddhist-integrated activities to enhance the self-esteem of volunteer seniors in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, revealed that the approach to expanding the activities promoting self-esteem among the senior volunteer group resulted in the senior gaining skills learned from the activities. The activities of teaching mindfulness practice and ensuring continuity and ease of understanding, making the seniors feel more valued. The seniors received encouragement to avoid negligence in life and provided positive feedback, expressing a desire for more sessions. The expansion of Buddhist mechanisms for senior activities to other districts in Nakhon Pathom Province and other provinces is a strong and important network-building effort to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices in developing activities for seniors. The main steps are as follows: 1) Building understanding and participation 2) Developing activities according to Buddhist principles 3) Networking with,

### 1. Study of activities and Buddhist principles to promote the value of the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province

The research results have shown that the implementation of activities to create a space that guarantees honesty and sincerity in working together found that the study of activities and Buddhist principles resulted in the elderly feeling like they were part of the community. Promoting self-esteem can be done by supporting the elderly to have opportunities to make decisions and participate in managing various activities, resulting in the results that the implementation of the principles of the Four Divine Abodes, the Four Bases of Power, and the Four Bhavanas enabled the elderly to manage daily life problems to promote mental health, have self-esteem, and be happy in daily life. Overall, the activities were characterized by exchanging opinions, participating in decision-making, and helping to develop confidence in life and problem-solving. The purpose of creating and organizing activities was to create guidelines for managing daily life



problems and promote mental health, leading to activities to develop daily life skills that had a positive effect on self-esteem. The results of the activities were processed as shown in the following figure.



**Fig. 1** Study of activities and Buddhist principles to promote the value of the volunteer groups

### 2. Development of integrated Buddhist activities with participation to promote self-esteem of elderly volunteer groups in Sam Phran District Nakhon Pathom Province

The research results found that the activities made the elderly learn effectively in terms of physical, mental, intellectual, and social health, and had more self-confidence. The elderly enjoyed a variety of activities, consisting, Activity 1: Dhamma Awakening, Activity 2: Buddha's Mind, and Activity 3: Senior Power Volunteers for Happiness. The results were good, allowing the elderly to learn comprehensively in terms of physical, mental, intellectual, and social health, and had more self-esteem. The elderly enjoyed a variety of activities, such as mindfulness and concentration training activities, mindfulness training activities, various meditations, or yoga, and exercises that emphasize breathing and slow movement.



**Fig. 2** Development of integrated Buddhist activities with participation to promote self-esteem of elderly volunteer groups

### 3. Expansion of integrated Buddhist activities with participation for self-esteem of elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province

The research results found that the researchers organized activities consisting of 1) Stepping towards value with Dhamma, 2) Breathing comfortably, resting the mind in the present, and 3) Promoting self-esteem by explaining the importance and details of each activity and participating in activities to create a friendly and fun atmosphere, giving participants an opportunity to express their opinions and suggest ways to develop activities by bringing activities into the activity creation process, allowing the elderly in the group to increase the skills learned from the activities. Within the activities, mindfulness training was taught and the activities were continuous and easy to understand, making the elderly feel more valuable and encouraging them not to be careless in life. The feedback was good and they wanted to organize it again. Expanding the Buddhist mechanism for elderly activities to the associations of the elderly in other districts in Nakhon Pathom Province and other provinces is considered an important network to exchange knowledge, experiences, and good practices in developing activities for the elderly.





**Fig. 3** Expansion of integrated Buddhist activities with participation for self-esteem of elderly volunteer groups

## 7. Discussion

1) The examination of Buddhist principles aimed at enhancing self-esteem among the elderly in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, revealed that 1) employing the four divine states of mind to assist others and foster a positive environment will enable the elderly to feel significant and valued. 2) Merging the four bases of influence emphasizes formulating strategies to address daily life challenges in order to enhance the mental well-being of the elderly. 3) Implementing the four meditations aids the elderly in achieving confidence and joy in their everyday lives by creating chances for them to share ideas, take part in decision-making, and exchange experiences. This aligns with the study conducted by Saengthian Phap Phrikphring et al. (2018: 121), who researched “Eating and Living to Lead to Desired Health of the Elderly in Ban Klang, Huai Pong Subdistrict, Mueang District, Mae Hong Son Province.” This research study utilized participatory action research. In terms of living, the researchers arranged a workshop during the research process on “Experimental Activities for Change” focusing on emotions and mental states, facilitating recreational activities to instill freshness and vitality in the elderly group. It also unites individuals of three generations, allowing them the chance to play and enjoy laughter together. Beyond enhancing emotional and mental well-being, this activity also promotes physical health through activities like moving the body to music without restrictions on posture, jogging, vision testing, hearing tests, etc. via sub-activities including laughing, threading a needle, water balloon games, and circle dancing to music (when the music halts, cease dancing, remain still, do not move). Each activity will be conducted in levels: children, women, and men. Certain activities can be jointly participated in. There will also be a lucky draw, with prizes awarded to the elderly and the research team. 2) The advancement of activities aimed at enhancing self-esteem among the elderly through involvement in the volunteer elderly group in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, indicated that organizing activities designed to elevate self-esteem in the elderly through participation in the volunteer elderly group comprises vital steps, starting from creating learning media that encompasses physical, mental, intellectual, and social health. This is an initiative that incorporates meditation training and encourages self-esteem utilizing strategies that instigate habitual behaviors and foster a health-promoting environment. This corresponds with the findings of Somporn Phothinam (2006), who researched “Studying the Thai Elderly: The Context of Maha Sarakham Province.” The research results concluded that the elderly's quality of life in Maha Sarakham Province is predominantly commendable, with the elderly recognizing their quality of life and contentment. Their satisfaction with life and overall health are deemed very good. Factors influencing quality of life include community engagement, family relationships, self-esteem, and income. Assessing happiness revealed that the elderly experience a significant level of happiness, with self-esteem, educational attainment, club membership, involvement in community clubs, and family size being influential factors. Regarding welfare perceptions among the elderly, it was discovered that they possess a good understanding of welfare allowances and medical treatment entitlements. Those in rural locales primarily require financial aid and healthcare support. 5. 2. 3 The extension of activities to uplift self-esteem among volunteer elderly groups in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, demonstrated that 1) applying the four divine states of mind to bolster self-esteem in the elderly, notably the principles of loving-kindness and compassion, encourages the elderly to feel cherished and cared for by others. 2) Utilizing the four bases of influence to acquire new skills that enhance feelings of worth and achievement. 3) Implementing the four meditation guidelines in accordance with mindfulness training to recognize bodily states, movement, and meditation, empowering the elderly. This is consistent with Kanya Wongchaiwat's research (2019), which investigated “Application of Buddhist principles to develop the quality of life of the elderly after retirement.” The results indicated that the Buddhist principles employed to enhance the quality of life for retirees include the Fourfold Meditation, comprising physical, moral, mental, and intellectual development. These principles aim to cultivate individuals in society to possess optimal physical health, experience happiness, contribute to the community, and lead a wise life. The application of Buddhist principles to elevate the life quality of retirees involves living daily life according to the Fourfold Meditation, specifically, focusing on physical development, adhering to the Four Requirements to genuinely benefit health, regular exercise, contributing to society, conducting oneself morally and non-harmfully towards

others, as well as being socially beneficial; enhancing the mind through Dhamma practice to cultivate a robust mindset, embracing morality, and achieving happiness; and promoting wisdom by engaging in Dhamma discussions, being aware of the world, living wisely, and acquiring problem-solving skills.

### 7.1 Knowledge Obtained From the Research

Knowledge obtained from the research on the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province is detailed in the following diagram.

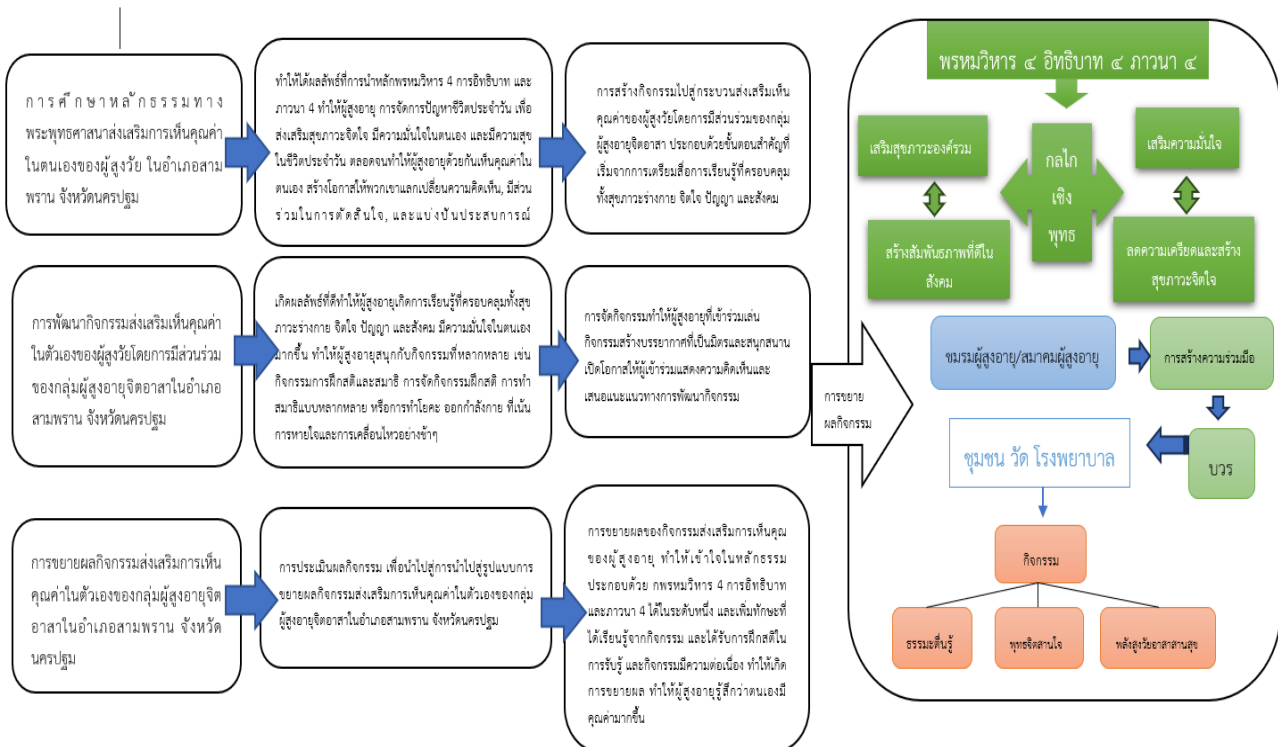


Fig. 4 Knowledge obtained from the research

### 7.2 Suggestions

The research entitled “Buddhist integrated mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province,” the research team has set suggestions for the utilization of the research, which are as follows:

1. Suggestion for application. Academics who will study the integrated Buddhist mechanism to promote self-esteem among elderly volunteers in Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province will receive knowledge guidelines for conducting activities that can be developed from various principles for the exchange of knowledge and from the foundation of applying the knowledge obtained to further study as a foundation for dissemination to agencies and the general public, so that they can use the knowledge set to study and further develop self-esteem among elderly volunteers in general groups effectively.
2. Suggestion for future research. The participants in this study are general elderly people in Nakhon Pathom Province. They can use the useful data for their studies. For the next study, there should be groups of elderly people in other research areas to study and confirm the research. Because this study is a study of groups of elderly people in the research area, there are various other methods. There is a study and follow-up in the period and leading to lessons learned and organizing activities for activity evaluation leading to a model for expanding the activity results. There is an expansion of the scope, creating useful information, and organizing activities that are appropriate for the elderly, in a variety, and there is research that goes in the same direction.

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