

### Monks and Building Well-being

The 5th National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on the development of monks' well-being<sup>1</sup>,

*Recognizing* that 95 percent of Thai people are Buddhists, for whom the teachings of the Buddha serve as a way of life so much that they are the foundation for the rituals and culture that are the identity and heritage of the Thai nation and that monks play a highly important role in transmitting the Buddha's teachings, developing knowledge of virtue and ethics, and in the development of local community societies, serving as positive role models for communities in taking care of their own health, temple environment, and expanding those effects out into developing the well-being of the community;

*Concerned* that monks have health problems, particularly those which are chronic and non-contagious, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, ischemic heart disease, and high blood hyperlipidemia, for which one important contributing factor is the food offered to them by householders who lack knowledge, understanding and awareness of the drawbacks to illness among monks, that monks engage in risk behaviors, which are causes of illness, such as smoking tobacco, drinking coffee, drinking energy drinks, and lacking proper exercise, and that if these matters are not addressed, more monks will become ill;

*Acknowledging* that while monks' health problems are being addressed by various agencies, those agencies only do it on an ad hoc basis and lack mechanisms of operation, lack true integration with various sectors, and operate only in certain areas, that even if monks have health insurance, when they are sick they still have problems receiving medical and public health services, and that monks do not receive healthcare in a consistent and comprehensive manner,

*Concerned* that if there is no development in the process of promoting and caring for monks' health, this will cause the mechanism of transmission of Buddhism and the righteous development of virtue and ethics that is important to Thailand to weaken,

*Appreciating* that many operations have been implemented, such as the Health Promoting Temple Project, the Monks' Network for Promoting Health Project of the Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health, the systemization of monks' health in Si-khio district by the Health Assembly of Nakhon Ratchasima along with the Sangha Pathana Network of Khorat, the successful project addressing the problem of unplanned teen pregnancy of the abbot of Wat Sirattnaram, Chonsombun sub-district, Nong Muang district, Lopburi, the project of 5-So Temple under the Sangha Council in Saraburi, and Wat Romruen's Good Health for Monks through Community Project in Singburi,

*Deeming* it necessary to give importance to healthcare for monks so they have a good quality of life, and well-being physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially, as well as to arrange an environment that promotes health, by building connections between the temple and the community, making monks healthy, temples stable, and the community resilient,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolution,

1. Requesting Office of National Buddhism to support the work of the Sangha Council and serve as the primary organization in coordinating with the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, academic institutes, local government organizations, community organizations, public and private partner networks as follows:

1.1. Develop conduct guidelines for monks compatible with both the Vinaya and health situation,

---

<sup>1</sup> Document Health Assembly 5/Main 3

1.2 Prepare a strategic plan to drive, measure, and promote health, in order to facilitate participation in caring for the health of monks and the community,

1.3 Implement and develop a registry and set up a nationwide information database for monks, as well as coordinating with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security on the rights of monks regarding concern social welfare,

1.4 Promote, encourage, and develop monk organizations so that monks can determine their own healthcare and that of other monks in their area, as well as participating in building community well-being.

1.5 Collaborate with community organizations in providing health care to monks in a comprehensive and far-reaching manner,

1.6 Collaborate with the Sangha Council, Ministry of Education, and Thai Health Promotion Foundation in promoting and supporting the inclusion of materials related to “Monks and Building Well-being” in various educational programs for monks, such as the *Sankhathikan* administrative training, monastic university programs, the *Dhammacharik* program, and the *Phra Nakphathana* program;

2 Requesting the Ministry of Public Health to take action, coordinate and cooperate with agencies that provide health care, whether public or private, local government organizations, Sangha councils, the communities, and the people sector in the implementation areas,

2.1 Promote and support health facilities at all levels to implement the development of the systems and models of administering healthcare, preliminary physical checkup/screening for chronic diseases, follow-up visits and care for monks with chronic diseases, disabilities, or handicapped, as well as long-term care in a comprehensive and continuous manner,.

2.2 Raise awareness so that the population considers the issue of monks’ health when making offerings or providing food and drink detrimental to the monks’ health, and so that they avoid or refrain from giving things that are detrimental to health, including tobacco, that could lead to chronic diseases.

3. Requesting the National Health Security Office to improve the criteria of health for facility services to enable monks to get better access to and make use of health services in every public health facility;

4. Requesting the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health to promote and support all Buddhist monk universities and other education institutions in setting up research studies and innovations in continuous health care for monks;

5. Requesting local government organizations at all levels to allow monks the opportunity to participate in work groups or committees on the development of community health care;

6. Requesting monk network organizations throughout the country to develop models, methods, or processes of learning, to promote and support the development of community well-being by having monks to guide and manage the development of temples to meet the standards of healthy temples everywhere;

7. Requesting the National Health Assembly to continue to promote and support and keep the issue of “Monks and Building Well-being” active at the ground level;

8. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report progress to the 7<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly.